LIVING TESTIMONIES;

OR,

SPIRITUAL LETTERS

ON

DIVINE SUBJECTS.

[PRICE FIVE SHILLINGS.]


BRITISH MUSEUM

LIVING TESTIMONIES;

OR,

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ON

DIVINE SUBJECTS.

By WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S. S.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET,

AND AT MONKWELL-STREET MEETING.

Ye are our epiſtle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. 2 COR. iii. 2.

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1797.

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LIVING TESTIMONIES,

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LETTER I.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON,
Paddington, near London, England.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

AS I have been much comforted and informed by your writings, ſent me from England a few months ſince, I feel a ſtrong inclination to addreſs and thank you; yet a ſenſe of my deep pollution, and a certainty of your being a true child of God, creates a conſciouſneſs of ſuch vaſt diſparity betwixt us, that I even tremble in the attempt.

I am a very ſinful and polluted man, Sir, that has been moſt wondrouſly and mercifully preſerved upon this earth near thirty years. I loſt my father about the age of ten; ever ſince, till within theſe

two years, I have been in bondage to Satan and to men, toſſed hither and thither for the bread that periſheth; yet ſo wonderfully connected was the chain of providence, that were you acquainted with the whole (much as you know of God's mercies), you would be aſtoniſhed at the diſcovery.

About two years ago I was convinced of ſin, under D. H——, at the New Church, P——; where I tarried until this time twelve month, when I was ordered, by the Victualling Board, clerk to a victualling office they have at this place during the war. Since my arrival (which is a year this very day) I have heard no word preached; nor is the Bible itſelf but rarely known, that bleſſed book being ſecured from the poor people by the cruelty of their teachers.

A few months ſince, it pleaſed God, in merciful providence, to ſend me hither Brown's Self-interpreting Bible; all Mr. John Bunyan's works, complete, in two volumes; your Dimenſions of Eternal Love, Myſtery of Godlineſs, Living Teſtimonies, and Light Shining in Darkneſs. From the whole of which, I thank my gracious God and Saviour, I find picking, and ſcraps of comfort, and inſtruction, when often at a ſtand; but particularly did I find comfort in Light Shining in Darkneſs, from page 281 to 284, as it reſpects a poor backſlider; and inſtruction from Myſtery of Godlineſs, reſpecting our Lord's deſcenſion into hell. Alas! alas! how often, inconſiderately and unthinkingly, have I repeated

peated the belief of that prepoſterous and horrible deceit! For what ſhould his precious Majeſty deſcend into hell, when all was finiſhed on the croſs? I am convinced in my ſoul it is a lie. I muſt alſo obſerve, that there is ſcarce a letter in your Living Teſtimonies that is not in a degree deſcriptive of ſome parts of my experience. Oh, I have a rich rich treaſury, a library invaluable, in all the aforeſaid books! may God, of his gracious mercy, aſſiſt me in the uſe of them.

You ſay, Sir, that "ſure you are none can de-"ſtroy the works of Satan but the Son of God," and that "the devil muſt be whipped by confeſſion and "prayer." Amen. So you preach, and ſo do I heartily believe; yet there are, I am informed, thoſe that call you an Antinomian. The good Lord, of his mercy, forgive them, and turn their hearts. I hope to ſend to P———, by the firſt ſhip, for your Forty Stripes, &c.

Seeing, dear Sir, I am ſhut out of ordinances, and from converſation with the godly and experienced, will you permit me to ſolicit your advice. I have been, and am now, ſingularly exerciſed. When firſt I began to pray, about two years ago, Satan would preſent before my fancy ſuch horrid and obſcene poſtures of God and Chriſt as I dare not mention; when that a little vaniſhed, blaſphemies ſucceeded in my mind; when that was a little allayed, carnal temptations followed, and here (oh, tears of blood never can efface it!) here I fell!

Since that, a deeper concern, or a ſtirring up, beginning again to manifeſt itſelf, and a ſhunning heartily the world and men, he preſents his horrible ſelf, horned—black—ſeated in a chair before me, ready to receive my prayers when I fall upon my knees. Oh Sir, Sir, I wreſtle not with fleſh and blood *only* (though that is rebellious enough), but with principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſs, in high places!

I am not clear, reverend and dear Sir, about my worſhip; far from it. I have again and again read your preface to Light in Darkneſs. I would wiſh to be informed if any image muſt be conceived in prayer; or how the gracious Lord manifeſts himſelf to the enlightened apprehenſion. I am very carnal and ignorant, and beg inſtruction, Sir. God doth know I write ſimply for inſtruction; nor is there a ſoul on earth privy to this proceeding.

A man (who, I am ſure, prays not at all) ſpeaking, the other day, of catholic images which abound here, ſays unto me, Why, you muſt *conceive ſomething* when you pray. I felt force in the appeal, but could not anſwer it, and the thought works upon me.

Permit me farther to inquire, Sir, reſpecting the ſacrament. Should I receive it from a dead Proteſtant church here, who know not God? or ſhould I refrain? I have not hitherto, and have been but a few times to church, their mangling of the things of God doth ſo offend me.

And

And laſtly, Sir, as I have ventured ſo far, I am deſirous to ſpeak to you of my walk. I do firmly believe we muſt walk in the *Spirit*, if we would not fulfil the luſts of the *fleſh*. This is the walk I am ſeeking to attain; but whether I ſtrive lawfully I cannot determine. I hope, in time, God will appear for me, though I certainly at preſent go very heartleſsly on; but I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him; and ſurely it is of his tender mercies I am not conſumed.

Will you forgive my intruſion, reverend Sir, even if you ſhould not feel a wiſh to anſwer me? I certainly am very unworthy your attention.

I am, Sir, with due reſpect,

Your very humble, guilty,

and unworthy ſervant,

Cove of Cork.

J. H.

LETTER II.

To J—— H———, *Cove of Cork, Ireland.*

FELLOW ſinner in Adam, and fellow ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus, grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the great channel of all conveyance. That the Moſt High God ſhould condeſcend to own, bleſs, or acknowledge any thing written or ſpoken by me, is wonderful to many, and a humbling conſideration to me; but this treaſure is in the earthen veſſel, that the excellency may appear to be of God, and not of man; and the more weak and contemptible the veſſel, the leſs liable to rob the fountain that fills it. I know of no diſparity, Sir, between the children of men in God's ſight, unleſs ſovereign Grace has made it. Chriſt will have nothing to do with any of the human race in a way of grace, but with ſenſible ſinners; for though all men are the creatures of his care, theſe only are the people of his charge. Sinful and polluted is the whole fountain, Sir; and who can bring a clean thing from it? None but God, who hath ſent forth his own Son, made of a woman, and yet holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, and who is a fountain that cleanſeth us from all ſin.

The

The name of an Antinomian is to me like the ſerpent upon a rock, or like the ſhip in the midſt of the ſea; the former makes no impreſſion, and the latter ſoon loſes its wake. A conſcience purged from guilt, and furniſhed with the Spirit's teſtimony, is proof againſt all the counſel of devils, and artillery of men. If God chooſes, who can reprobate? It is God that juſtifieth, who can condemn? If he gives peace, who can create trouble? No weapon formed can proſper. Let them all curſe, but bleſs thou.

You are ſhut out from ordinances, and from the converſation of the godly and experienced; this you intimate to be your lamentation, and I have, for upwards of twenty years, viewed ſuch a ſituation to be the one thing needful. My ſoul is ſick of this world, ſick of men, ſick of preachers, ſick of profeſſors, and ſick of many real ſaints, who are blown too and fro with every wind of doctrine, charmed with novelty, tranſported with an empty noiſe, zealouſly affected with the wanton allurements and empty oratory of the ſons of Belial, and who cannot diſtinguiſh between Chriſt and Satan; nor between an ambaſſador of Chriſt by whom the Lord ſpeaks, and falſe teachers by whom Satan ſpeaks. Satan, from the firſt, ſpoke by the ſerpent, and proclaims his guile by a generation of vipers to this day. The Lord rebuked Balaam by the aſs, and by deſpicable means he ſtill ſpeaks to ſinners: now, the former is admired for his cunning,

the latter rejected for its ſtupidity. To diſtinguiſh here is the wiſdom of the wiſe; and to purſue the conſecrated path of the latter, is walking in the way which no fowl knoweth. God does all things well; his lips tranſgreſs not in judgment, nor can there be any error in his government; where he fixes our ſtation is beſt for us, and all things ſhall work for our good. Company entice us to talk, lonelineſs leads us to think: the former empties the cruſe, the latter fills it: the latter humbles, ſweetens, and meekens us; the former exalts us, and nurſes pride. The talk of the lip tendeth only to penury; but meditation is ſweet to the ſoul. You are welcome to your company; give me a place of wayfaring men; let the ſwallow fly with her ſhoal, but let me be the ſparrow alone upon the houſe-top; in the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin, but prayer in the cloſet brings open reward. All diſcontent flows from a conſciouſneſs of diſtance, guilt, or ſome legal impediment, rebellion, carnal enmity, ſtubbornneſs, or ſome indulged luſt, or prohibited idol, ſenſibly felt as ſtanding between God and the ſoul, which provokes the Lord to jealouſy, hides his face, cloſes his ear to prayer, claſps his bountiful hand, and ſtraitens the bowels of his mercy againſt us; for our God is a jealous God, and will never unite with inordinate affections, nor ſuffer a rival to himſelf unreſented. When the intercourſe between God and the ſoul is open, we are in good company; and when the heart is fixed,

every

every part of the globe is both a home and a habitation.

I am not ignorant of the ghaſtly images exhibited on the carnal mind, as ſo many deformed repreſentations of the object of worſhip. All idolatry began here: the idol was firſt ſet up in the heart, then repreſented to the limner, and formed by the artiſt. This was Iſrael's firſt ſtumbling-block: Satan drew the plan on the ſtage of fancy, and, when the idol was formed, they worſhipped the firſt founder in the idol; they ſacrificed to devils, and not to God. The advocate for catholic images ſhould have told you what form you ſhould conceive when you pray; but here the divine queſtion is, To whom then will you liken God? or what likeneſs will ye compare unto him? Iſaiah xl. 18. 25; xlvi. 5. A human form muſt not be conceived; this conception is exploded. Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf, but I will reprove thee, and ſet thy ſins in order before thee; now conſider this, ye that forget God, &c. The godhead is not to be likened to corruptible man, to fourfooted beaſts, nor to creeping things, whether portrayed by the devil, or graven by art and man's device. Rom. i. 23; Acts xvii. 29. Iſrael ſaw no ſimilitude, and therefore was ſtrictly forbidden the making *of any image, male or female, the likeneſs of any fowl, beaſt, creeping thing, or fiſh.* Read Deut. iv. The Deity compares himſelf to *living water*, Jer. ii. 13; to *fire*, Heb. xii. 29;

and to *wind*, John iii. 8; Song iv. 16. Of all which no image can be formed, either human or brutal. Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth crucified among us, and we can conceive of him as a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief, and in all his ſuffering circumſtances, which is food for faith; but though we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, yet henceforth know we him ſo no more; for Chriſt now appears in a ſpiritual body, in his glorified humanity, in which he is ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens; in this appearance he preſented himſelf to John. Read Rev. i. 13—17. So he appeared to Ezekiel. Ezek. i. 26—28. Dan. vii. 9—11. Of this glorious and glorified appearance no image of ſilver, gold, or wood, can be made without degrading the Saviour, and committing rank idolatry. Solomon's temple was not an object of worſhip, though the Lord which dwelt between the cherubims was; nor is the temple of Chriſt's human body, ſtrictly ſpeaking and abſtractedly conſidered, an object of worſhip, though the fulneſs of the godhead, which dwells bodily in it, really is. Of Infinity and Immenſity no likeneſs can be formed; nor is it poſſible for the ſhallow conceptions of the human mind ever to circumſcribe or retain a Being who is omnipreſent and incomprehenſible. The firſt view that ever I had, was a believing view of Chriſt crucified; this was in open viſion, and in the Lord's own light, while infinite Divinity above the light, or brightneſs of a thou-

ſand ſuns, ſhone into my ſoul. After many months this viſion of him on the croſs gradually withdrew, vaniſhed, and went in a meaſure out of ſight; but the divine, co-equal, co-eſſential, and co-eternal beam of ineffable light, ſtill remains with me, as the true light which now ſhineth. I now view my Saviour as the fountain of light, life, and love; as God to all intents and purpoſes; and in all the fulneſs, glory, and majeſty, of ſelf-exiſtent and independent divinity; and in every ſenſe and meaning of that great and terrible name, JEHOVAH. It remains then, that I ſtill worſhip the fulneſs of the Godhead in Chriſt's glorified humanity, and God, the Father, as ſhining in his face: and ſo it is written, God, that cauſed the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon; and he that thus hath the Son, hath the Father alſo.

As to your ſitting at the Lord's table with a blind guide, I muſt leave to your conſcience; for my part I could not: we are not to ſeek the living among the dead. I am no ſtranger, dear Sir, to the diſtreſſing impreſſions of the adverſary on the imagination; he can mingle his very rebellion, deſperation, madneſs, and enmity to God, even with our very ſouls, when he is ſuffered to buffet, vex, and diſtreſs us, under the workings of unbelief; but as the

the light ſhines in, he will be diſcovered; and at the entrance of joy and peace he will ſkulk off.

If any thing in this ſcribble ſuits you, bleſs God for it; and when it is well with you, forget not to pray for

Paddington.

W. H. S.S.

LETTER

LETTER III.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

I HAVE longed to hear from my dear friend ever ſince he has left us, and he, perhaps, has expected to hear from me before this time; and he would, if I had not been ſo ſlow of heart to every thing that is good. This is my caſe, and this is the reaſon I did not write ſooner. I do not know how you now do, nor what your thoughts are reſpecting your laſt viſit to us; but I believe it was the moſt profitable, in general, that ever you paid L——; and I think I can ſay ſo with reſpect to myſelf in particular. My views have ſince been more brightened, widened, and extended; and ſome very ſweet and comfortable ſeaſons I have found, both in private and public; and I find, that when we are diligent and earneſt with him in the cloſet, that he will reward us openly. I had begged the Saviour to communicate ſome gift to me by your coming, and my prayer was not in vain; I was refreſhed and ſtrengthened, and I feel the effects ſtill abiding with me, and I am ſure it was of him. But what a compoſition of light and darkneſs, faith and infidelity, I feel myſelf to be!

be! Sometimes (as I think) all light, and can diſcover deep things out of darkneſs; and then again all darkneſs and confuſion, and feel for ſome one to lead me by the hand. At times ſtand ſo ſtrong, that I am ready to conclude nothing can throw me down any more; but, by and by, I am at the gates of death, and can hardly believe that there is a God in heaven, but that every thing I have felt, ſeen, or heard of, is a deluſion. Some ſeaſons of ſweet melting and weeping in private, then I am comfortable; but it is not long before I meet ſomething that throws me into a paſſion, or the ſweetneſs will begin to wear off, then I am trying to catch it and keep it, and if I cannot I begin to fret, then it is all over. After a few ſeaſons of enlargement in the pulpit, I begin to think that I am going to be moved into a new climate, that I ſhall get no more into the dreary regions of darkneſs, bondage, and bitterneſs, again; but oh! how I am diſappointed! and then conclude it was nothing but froth. But that which ſtaggers and diſtreſſes me moſt of all, is the attacks which the filthy corruptions of my heart make when they come all of a ſudden into my thoughts, juſt as if the devil had been muſtering them up; when I have no inclination for them they force themſelves. Theſe are chiefly the ſins that I uſed to be a ſlave to, and they often now get into my thoughts, and there is ſomething that is for indulging them, which makes me fear that grace does not reign; for if it did, it would not be ſo. This

throws

throws me into fretting and rebelling, and then all hope and comfort are gone. Oh! this is the peſt and the plague of my ſoul! Would to God they were deſtroyed, for I do not want them, nor wiſh for them. I long indulged them, and was a willing ſlave to them; but I had rather go again through many years more of this miſery, wrath, guilt, and terror, than be under the dominion of them; and I often beg God to throw me back again, if he ſees it neceſſary, rather than to be a hypocrite in Zion.

Many kind reſpects are ſent you from this place. Several have told me they never could underſtand you ſo well before, and I believe them; but the alteration is in themſelves. I am often grudging in my heart, that I have been obliged to hunt them through all the dirty holes of the devil, and you come to find them, and have the ſweetneſs of diſcovering them. I have, at times, ſaid that I will do no more of it. I am fully perſuaded that the Lord ſent you down to us, though he burnt our coats. I often grudge this, though I ſay nothing.

J. J.

LETTER IV.

To the Rev. J. J——.

REV. SIR,

I HAVE no doubt, my dear brother, but that God approved and bleſſed the viſit; and I think ſome poor ſouls, for the firſt time, had a glimpſe of the Saviour's countenance, which hath left a little myrrh upon the handle of the lock, and which is a prelude to the future glorious anointing. Since I left L—— I have had another little excurſion into the country, where I found another that is ſhut up and cannot come forth. This ſort of work ſeems, in a great meaſure, to be appointed to me, having now trod the hoſpitals for above three apprenticeſhips. But I am at preſent confined to my room, as a dumb man, in whoſe mouth are no reproofs. That my former viſits were not ſo profitable, is eaſy to be accounted for: you had got them all ſo near the tropic of Cancer, that they were quite beyond my preſent climate, as I have not now ſailed in that latitude for many years, nor do I wiſh to go thoſe northern voyages again. But as the Sun of Righteouſneſs has lately thawed their frozen hearts, and melted and

ſoftened

ſoftened their ſouls, under theſe ſweet beams the Lord hath drawn them nearer the torrid zone. Chriſt did not finiſh the work of our redemption at the extremities of the earth, either north or ſouth, but nearer the center, that ſinners might look to Calvary from the ends of the earth and be ſaved. I have long travailed in pain for thee, my ſon, and I hope I ſhall ſhortly ſee the bleſſed effects of it. When God reſtores comfort to Ephraim, he will not forget his mourners. I expect great things at L——; not a ſpurious race of hypocrites, not a mingled ſeed, nor ſuch as are clothed with ſtrange apparel. God hath planted thee wholly a right ſeed, and thine offſpring will be like thyſelf; it will be like people, like prieſt. Such, and only ſuch, are the bleſſed of the Lord, and their offſpring with them. The nearer they come to the Sun, the better they will underſtand me; and when you and I begin to ſee clearly eye to eye, they will perceive that we ſpeak the ſame things, and walk in the ſame ſteps. This beginning-work of burſting the bands and breaking the yokes, will be attended with a ſpirit of jealouſy and emulation among them, which will provoke very many; many will be gathering round theſe children of light, to inquire and examine who hath opened their eyes; and many will ſee theſe men upon whoſe bodies the fire had no power, and the ſound of theſe things will ſpread abroad, while *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* will be much caſt down in their own eyes, perceiving that this work is done of the

Lord. Thoſe intruding viſiters, of which thou complaineſt, are ſome of the old inhabitants of the land: *Judah could not drive them out of the vallies, becauſe they had chariots of iron.* Thou mayeſt at times bring them under, and thou mayeſt chaſe them out of ſight by prayer, and drive them into their holes; but I am afraid, after all thy labour and toil, that theſe heathens will come into the ſanctuary of the Lord—*that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh, and that which is born of the ſpirit is ſpirit*; this ſinful ſelf muſt be denied daily, this part of the croſs muſt be taken up and borne—*when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* When God anſwers prayer in the joy of our hearts, or gives us an anſwer of peace, we have no doubt but God regards us; but when we travail and labour in ſoul and body, ſeeking his kingdom, and the welfare of his ſubjects, till he burn the clothes from our backs for our pains, this is not ſo eaſily accounted for. I am come down, ſaith God, to deliver Iſrael; but the double taſk of bricks, the cruel mandates of the court, the ſtripes of the taſkmaſters, and the withdrawment of ſtraw, was ſuch a deliverance as puzzled Moſes himſelf not a little. *Job* was a man that feared God with all his heart, and he wiſhed to do it with all his houſe; and, leſt his children ſhould ſin againſt God, he ſent and ſanctified them, and offered a ſacrifice every morning, according to the number of them all; and he continued at this till

a wind from the wilderneſs ſmote the houſe and killed them all together.—*By terrible things in righteouſneſs wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our ſalvation!* Burning the coats grumbled in my heart not a little; but Aaron held his peace.

Feb. 2, 1797.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER V.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

REV. SIR,

IT has been on my mind to write to you ſeveral times, but thinking your time was much taken up in the miniſtry has cauſed me to delay; and knowing that you are an inſtrument in God's hand, by the love, joy, power, and peace, that my ſoul has felt and enjoyed in reading your writings, and in ſitting under your preaching, from the hand of the Lord, this cauſes me to ſend you theſe few lines.

About fourteen years ago I was convinced, by a dream, that I had awfully ſinned againſt God, and in my diſtreſs I promiſed never to ſin any more; but ſoon broke my promiſe, and went on in ſin, with my conſcience accuſing me daily for it. From this time forward I had the dread of future puniſhment continually on my mind.

About twenty years of age, when under great fear and torment, I had a freſh diſcovery of my ſins, I ſaw all the ſins that I ever committed in a trance; this was attended with an intolerable burden,

but

but I promiſed, if God ſpared me, never to ſin more: but when my ſtrength was recovered I took to a worſe courſe than ever, for I got into wicked company, and took to drinking in order to drown the thoughts of hell torments; I tried to harden my conſcience againſt all fear, and went on in this courſe for three or four years. Soon after this I was married, and, having a family coming on, I left my old companions and took to hard labour, with nothing but the thoughts of hell and damnation on my mind all the day long, and the devil tempting me to put an end to my life; but hearing theſe words often whiſpered to my mind, *flee from the wrath to come*, I thought the miniſter of the church muſt know if there was any way for me to eſcape; and the reaſon that I did not know, was becauſe I attended ſo careleſsly. I went to church, reſolved not to let any word ſlip of what the miniſter ſaid; but, alas! he ſaid nothing about my caſe. And as the people who attended ſeemed to know nothing about ſoul-trouble, I went there no more, but took to ſearching of books, and out of an old prayer-book I learnt many prayers, and ſaid them when I was under trouble, mourning over my hard fate with tears: this I called repentance; but God ſhewed me, in a dream, the end of the world, and Chriſt coming in the clouds of heaven; I looked to my repentance for refuge, but that was of no avail, for the mouth of the bottomleſs pit broke open juſt where I ſtood; this made my bondage to increaſe,

ſo that I thought the earth was not ſtrong enough to bear me up under my burden. I went to hear B—— H—— preach, and his confidence I took for faith, which ſoon lifted me up till my head touched the clouds. Soon after this I fell into ſin, and this brought diſtreſs on my mind again, and I tried to believe the promiſe according to what B— H—— preached; but I could not believe, for all my ſuppoſed faith was ſwept away. I was under ſore temptations, ſuch as no tongue can expreſs; there was no character to be compared with me in God's word, except that of *Legions*; the guilt of my ſin was upon me; Satan cloſe to my heels all day long, ſo that I was afraid to look behind me; the thoughts of my heart were ſuch, that I was forced to hold my mouth with all my might, leſt it ſhould break out in ſuch blaſphemy that the people would have me confined in a madhouſe: but finding that God ſpared me, I cried earneſtly to him for mercy, and that with tears; and Satan would tell me, " that Eſau " ſold his birthright, and afterwards ſought the " bleſſing with tears, but found no place of re- " pentance," &c.; and I had taken hold of the goſpel, and looked back and ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and there was no forgiveneſs for me. There is no tongue can expreſs what I felt at this time. One night as I was alone reading the paſſage where the Lord is ſaying, *I will be a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midſt of them*; this fire I took to be hell fire, and thought that it would devour me before

before morning: this drove me to cry to the Lord for mercy, and Chriſt appeared before my underſtanding with his pierced ſide, and I ſaw that he was bruiſed for my ſins; and look which way I would he was ſtill before me, and all my ſins were ſeparated from me: this filled my ſoul with love, joy, and peace; this enabled me, and cauſed me to mourn over him whom I had pierced by my ſins, abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes; at the ſame time my affections were in heaven, and theſe words were put in my mind, "I never will leave you, nor "forſake you;" and in this love I walked many weeks, and ſoon began to fear that my old friend **** was not born again, for he deſcribed nothing of the plague of the human heart, nor of the chaſtiſements of God, or the path of tribulation; and in anſwer to prayer the Lord diſcovered this more and more to me, which broke off all our acquaintance, and he caſt out my name as evil, that others ſhould not believe what I ſaid concerning his faith; but, as I could hear none but legal preachers, my ſoul was ſoon brought into bondage again, and this led me to backſliding, and every ſnare that Satan laid was a trap to my feet, and I was brought again under the law, and that worked wrath in me. I heard talk of you, Sir, and your books, but my old friend ſaid that he and you were exactly alike in experience, therefore I would not permit any of your writings to come into my houſe, till I heard a perſon read your Bank of Faith; this cauſed me to

think that I had been fighting againſt a true faith, for this appeared to me very different from my old friend's faith.

Soon after this I was coming to London, and was under ſore temptations to diſbelieve my ſonſhip; this cauſed me to ſeek the Lord by prayer, and he gave me freſh manifeſtations of his love. I aſked the Lord to bring you into the pulpit with ſome text of ſcripture reſpecting the *moral law*, and he really anſwered my prayer, for you ſpoke from theſe words, *The law of the wiſe is a fountain of life to depart from the ſnares of death.* Under this diſcourſe I ſaw that my ſoul was in bondage, and that I was left there, that Solomon's words might be fulfilled in me, *the backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways.* And this I had to the full after I returned home, and was forced to leave my old place where I uſed to hear, and try other miniſters, but found no ſatiſfaction under them.

At another time, a little before I was coming to London, I heard three different preachers handle this text of ſcripture, *But his mouth is moſt ſweet, yea he is altogether lovely*; but I got no ſatisfaction from what they ſaid. This drove me to prayer in the fields, and I aſked the Lord to let me hear you preach from the ſame text on the Tueſday evening following, at Monkwell-ſtreet; and the Lord anſwered me, for you preached from the ſame words, and I found it a Bethel to my ſoul.

At another time, under ſore diſtreſs, I was at

prayer in the woods, and the Lord broke in upon my ſoul afreſh with his lovingkindneſs and tender mercy; my faith was in exerciſe, and I ſet this as a criterion, " that if the Lord would let me hear " you on the next ſabbath-day on *ſanctification*, that " I then would believe that what my ſoul had paſt " under was a work of God's grace;" and you ſpake from theſe words, *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth:* I wondered at this, as you knew nothing of me. On the next Tueſday evening I heard you from the 11th of the Revelations, and the Lord ſet my ſoul at liberty from legal bondage. Oh! the condeſcenſion of Jeſus to hear and anſwer the prayer of ſo ungrateful a wretch as me! when you, Sir, little thought for whoſe ſake your texts were given. No tongue can expreſs the love, joy, and peace, I have enjoyed in the preſence of God under your preaching; I never heard you preach but what there was ſomething impreſſed on my mind which gave laſting ſatisfaction to my ſoul.

I have heard that you are coming to *Bolney*. There are a few people that deſire the ſincere milk of the word, and I have aſked the Lord to bring you to us in God's ſtrength, that you may ſeparate the vile from the precious, and be as God's mouth: my ſoul is on the watch to hear what the Lord will ſpeak to me by his ſervant. Mr. J—— has been made very uſeful in the hands of the Lord in labouring amongſt us; we have no other preacher near us who is any further than in the letter, and I bleſs God

there

there has not been one of them hid from my eyes ſince I heard you on the Revelations. I know you are a man in whom the Spirit of God dwells, and if I am worthy of an anſwer, let me hear from you as ſoon as time will permit. If you knew how my ſoul is knit to you in love, it would cauſe you to look over my blots, and pardon me for troubling you. My prayer is, that the Lord may bleſs you, and make you uſeful to his people. I remain, the leaſt of all God's ſaints,

M. R.

LETTER VI.

To Mr. M—— R——, *Bolney.*

BELOVED OF GOD, AND DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,

THINE epiſtle came ſafe to hand. The contents are, *glory to God in the higheſt, on earth peace and good will towards men.* It is truly an original, an exact copy of the hand-writing within, written with the finger of God on the fleſhly tables of thine heart, which hath made thee a living epiſtle known and read of all men. And God hath added his ſeal to the hand-writing; for it was attended with a great degree of *aſſurance*, which ratifies and confirms the truth of the goſpel upon the ſoul, and ſeals it up to the day of redemption, which is to us a pledge and an earneſt of the future inheritance; you may call it the firſt fruits of the Spirit, and of that glory which ſhall be revealed in us.

The tidings are choice, ſweet, and precious. I knew the voice as ſoon as the ſound of thy ſalutation reached my heart; for it is an echo of the voice of the Son of God reflected from an adopted child; a witneſs on earth, reſounding from the records of heaven,

heaven, proclaiming another branch of his work done, which is to purify the ſons of Levi, that they may bring a pure offering in righteouſneſs; and is a confirmation of the faithful ſaying, that *Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners.*

The ſmell of my ſon is as the ſmell of a field which the Lord hath bleſſed. He whoſe garments ſmell of myrrh, aloes, and caſſia, hath viſited him, and virtue is gone out of him; from hence came the odour, unction, and the ſweet ſavour, which are emitted from a manifeſtation of himſelf; which makes his name as ointment poured forth—and the ointment of thy right hand will ſoon betray itſelf. The cup of ſalvation hath its peculiar overflowings, and the words of wiſdom are a flowing brook, becauſe the ſpring of the waters of life cannot be confined: *Spring up, O well! Sing ye unto it*; and well we may, ſeeing it ſhall ſpring up within us into everlaſting life.

Thou art not the firſt poor man, my ſon, who hath had the ſad hap *to fall among thieves:* they may ſtrip us and wound us, but they cannot kill us quite; they are obliged to leave us as ſoon as we are half dead, that the good Samaritan may diſplay his ſkill. *Gilead* is never without a phyſician, nor yet without balm; and therefore the health of God's elect muſt be recovered, that they may bear witneſs to the truth—ye are my witneſſes.

I know of no worſe trap to a wounded ſpirit than a *miniſter of the letter, who holds the truth in unrighteouſneſs;*

unrighteouſneſs; a doctrine of the goſpel in his mouth deceives the ſimple; and a hard heart deceives him, and drives him into raſh preſumption: ſuch cannot allure, *but through the luſt of the fleſh and much wantonneſs*; nor can they encourage, but by arrogance and ignorance. Blind zeal, legal pride, ſelf conceit, and vain confidence, are communicated by too too many, which in the end is ſure to make ſad work for conſcience; for it is no leſs than fuel to feed the furnace of affliction, or elſe a worſe furnace. But it is by ſuch men that the contrary part are made manifeſt, and the precious ſeparated from the vile, *for he that feareth God ſhall come forth of them all*; but the ſinner ſhall be taken by them. All that come to us in this way (before Chriſt takes up his abode in the heart) are thieves and robbers, but the ſheep will not hear them when once the ſheep's nature is given to them; for when the Shepherd's voice of mercy, life, pardon, and peace, comes to be felt, enjoyed, and underſtood, then farewell to *lo here, and lo there*. After this all preaching muſt agree with the unction within, and if any man teach us not as that anointing teacheth us, we need no ſuch teachers, becauſe their word contradicts the Spirit's work; they are altogether out of the ſecret, the myſtery is hid from them, and the matter is not perceived by them. Nevertheleſs, we may ſay with Paul, *that by all things we are inſtructed*; for by theſe we find out what the ſcriptures mean by lamps without oil, wells without water, and clouds

clouds without rain. If the Almighty did not ſet ſuch characters before us, we ſhould not ſo well underſtand his portraits; but by comparing the one with the other we find out feigned faith, vain confidence, empty gifts, diſſembled love, and learn to diſtinguiſh between the ſheep-ſkin and the wolf that wears it; and when the Lord diſcovers them to us, it is a hint given that we may withdraw from them *in whom we perceive not the lips of wiſdom*, nor even meddle with them that are given to change: beſides, it teaches us to prize a faithful friend the more. Many believed on the Saviour upon the ſight of his miracles, but he did not commit himſelf to them, he took them not into his privy council, nor did he open one ſecret to them, or make free with them, *for he knew all men, and he knew what was in man.* Moreover, among his own diſciples he had one which is called *the diſciple whom Jeſus loved*; with whom, perhaps, he might with more freedom converſe, and who outlived all the others, and was the only one who died a natural death; all the reſt ſuffered martyrdom. Chooſe your company, and when you find one after your own heart, value him; but, above all, endeavour to keep up communion and fellowſhip with that *friend that loveth at all times, and who ſticketh cloſer than a brother.* Wiſdom is the principal thing, embrace her, and hold her faſt; *ſhe ſhall be an ornament of grace to thine head, a crown of glory ſhall ſhe deliver to thee*; her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.

Yea,

Yea, amidſt a thouſand ſtorms ſhe keeps the ſoul in heavenly tranquillity; ſhe improves every diſappointment, loſs, and croſs, to our advantage; ſets us down under the ſame experiences and ſenſations of the ſaints of old; moves us from one covenant view to another, from one enlargement to another, from ſtage to ſtage, and from ſtrength to ſtrength, till our ſouls take up their various lodgments in the ſame reſting-places of thoſe who are gone before, and who, through faith and patience, inherit the promiſes. Theſe are the footſteps of the flock. When the apoſtles had been for ſome time favoured with the pleaſing and happy enjoyment of one branch of the Saviour's work, they came into ſoul-trials, which brought them out into another. In this way thoſe great champions fulfilled their miniſtry, and their flocks, following them, finiſhed their warfare: their leaders brought forth, out of the Lord's treaſures, things new and old; and their followers found their portion of meat in due ſeaſon.

Dear brother (ſo I call you, though unknown), adieu.

W. HUNTINGTON.

Church-ſtreet,
Paddington.

LETTER VII.

To the Rev. Mr. J——.

REV. SIR,

I THANK my kind friend for his laſt, and hope ever to remember him in my poor petitions, when the heavenly aid of the kind and dear Comforter ſhall be upon me in that bleſſed privilege. My poor, leaky, and weatherbeaten veſſel, is fallen into a certain creek where two ſeas meet; I mean the treachery and malice of pretended friends, and the ſcorn and contempt of open foes. Had it been an enemy, or one that hated me, I could have borne it, or hid myſelf from him; but counſellors, guides, companions, familiar friends, with whom I have walked to the houſe of God in company, are among the conſpirators; and thoſe who have eaten bread with me have lifted up the heel againſt me. But my dear Maſter himſelf went through this part of the path of tribulation, and we muſt follow his ſteps. Much ſoul-travail, hard ſtudy, weariſome nights, daily prayers, and many tears, have been my exerciſe for the good of their ſouls, who now hate me for attempting to undeceive them, and pluck them from

from the hand of the artful fowler. I know the terrors of the Lord, nor am I ignorant of the conſequences that will follow this revival of the old cauſe which was once pleaded at the *waters of ſtrife*. They have been too well fed, their ſouls begin to loath the *manna*, the *honeycomb*, and the *feaſt of fat things*; theſe are become too common: and ſure I am that God will proclaim a faſt to theſe, he will turn them out of the vineyard, and ſeparate them from the comfortable preſence of the living Vine; all ſmiles of the Bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days; they want huſks, wine mixed with water, and theſe ſtolen, for only ſuch are ſweet to them. They have ſent for the impoſtor up, and I am glad of it; *for the hand of God ſhall be known toward his ſervants, and his indignation toward his enemies.* God ſhall give them their own way, and they ſhall be filled with their own devices; *for the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.*

Some have been much grieved at my proſperity; they could not endure to ſee God ſpread a table for me in the midſt of mine enemies, though, I believe, I might have cried, My leanneſs! My leanneſs! long enough, if God had raiſed me up no better ſupporters than theſe who are now in the tents of Korah. They would wiſh me *to take my bread out of the thorns, or cut up juniper-roots for my meat*; but they that would muzzle the ox, ſhall feed the

wolf; for it is but juſt that thoſe who would ſtarve them that wait at the altar, ſhould be left *to ſpend money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not.* Chriſt will have no neutrals where he comes. If the Jewiſh ſanhedrim cannot afford the Saviour a winding ſheet, they ſhall give large money to the ſoldiers to obſcure his reſurrection from the dead.

In ſuch caſes as this there is no conferring with fleſh and blood; carnal reaſon and unbelief would be for curſing the day in which it was ſaid, there is a man-child conceived; or elſe, *woe is me, my mother, that thou haſt born me a man of ſtrife and contention to all the earth:* this brings nothing in, but there is a deal of it conceived in the heart. But no way ſo ſafe, ſo good, ſo pleaſing to God, as pouring it out before his throne; hourly conceptions of this ſort has furniſhed me with hourly burdens for the ſhoulders of my great Deliverer; bleſs him for ever, who, in this valley of Achor, gives us a door of hope. You may ſee where I have been, and where I now am; frail nature hath got her arguments and pleas in us all; the great Captain ſhewed this—*I looked for ſome to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none: they gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirſt they gave me vinegar to drink;* and we muſt taſte the bitter cup, as well as the cup of ſalvation. This is the third time that I have been in perils among falſe brethren.—The firſt was at *Wooking*, in Surry, through the inſtrumentality

mentality of a miniſter of Satan; that was the longeſt and ſoreſt trial that I had met with ſince my releaſe from Sinai. I was then a young father in Chriſt, and too fond of my children, and therefore violence and cruelty were uſed, both by the falſe and true brethren; the former influenced the latter: but this was appointed, that my affections might be beat off by violence, and ſoon after I was ordered to London. But if that cruel uſage had not come upon me, I ſhould have come to London like a ſilly dove without a heart; but the children I had ſwaddled the enemy carried away; ſo that I was ready to fondle any that the Lord ſhould give me elſewhere.

At Richmond I had a little more fiſhing in theſe troubled waters; but we muſt ariſe and depart, for this is not our reſt, it is polluted. I was in hopes that the greateſt part of the burden and heat of the day was over; but evil days and weariſome nights are the lot of them who labour in the word and doctrine. Let me lay a little of this weight upon thy ſhoulders, and fail not to bring me forth in thy petitions; for God knows it is for the hope of Iſrael that I am entangled in theſe briars. Remember my bonds.

W. HUNTINGTON.

Church-ſtreet, Paddington.

LETTER VIII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY EVER DEAR AND MUCH HONOURED FRIEND,

I HAVE received and read your laſt favour, and am not a little aſtoniſhed at what you tell me. Indeed I can ſee where you are, and do ſympathize too with you from my heart; and though I am not able to give you any help, yet my poor prayers are in your preſent calamity; and I believe the Lord has of late ſet you much on my heart, nor have I the leaſt doubt but that he will bring you through all this with a high hand.

I have a great deſire to turn comforter: however this I will venture to ſay, that your late journey was contrived by Infinite Wiſdom; and whatever they are who have their hands in it, it will be found to be *one* of the *all things* that ſhall work, not only for your own good, but for the good of hundreds beſides; and I can ſee, with half an eye, that Satan will be the greateſt loſer by it at the long run; for I know that his wiles will be further diſcovered, and that himſelf will be cloſer purſued; and at every ſtep of ground he loſes my ſoul will rejoice, for I hate him with a perfect hatred.

I cannot

I cannot read this letter without being filled with indignation. Lord, how long wilt thou ſuffer hypocrites, liars, impoſtors, and devils, to proſper! and the juſt to ſee iniquity and look at grievance, and ſuffer ſpoiling and violence to remain before them! What ſhall we ſay to all theſe things? This I will ſay, that I do not now wonder that the Lord's dealings puzzle ſuch a poor creature of the night as I am, when they try thoſe whom he ſo dearly loves, thoſe who have had ſo much of his ſecrets, and ſuch as he has inſtructed with ſo ſtrong a hand. Many times has my heart heaved againſt him for favouring thoſe whom I know at the ſame time he hates, and continuing to frown upon them whom he knows love his truth, his cauſe, his people, and his name. Now it ſtaggers me when I think how that arrogant and preſumptuous hypocrite could write ſuch a book againſt you. It is a teſtimony againſt his own ſoul; the infernal hatred of his heart recorded by his own hand: ſure I am he is gone beyond the bounds of fear. And here I am tumbling and ſtumbling in the dark, and cannot get the uſe of any of my faculties; I cannot, if I was to die, commit to paper what I ſee, and what I conceive in my thoughts. But the devil helps his own children; and I am as ſure, as there is a God in heaven, that he will damn that hypocrite, if he lives and dies in his preſent ſtate.

I do earneſtly pray the Almighty (if I am to live longer in the world than you) that, when your head

is laid in the grave, I may never afterwards go to London; but that he would hide me in ſome country place near a wood, give me food and raiment, and make me uſeful in my little ſphere to ſome poor and ſimple people. This is my wiſh and deſire, and never to be ſtationed where Satan's ſeat is.

When will it be convenient for me to ſpend a few days with you? I hope you will favour me with a line in the courſe of next week; and if your mind and circumſtances are at liberty, tell me when I may come; if not, I will wait till they are.

The Lord be with you, bleſs and ſtrengthen you for the work he has cut out for you. He ſurely will; himſelf has promiſed it, and he has done it, and will do it to the end. This is the prayer of him who ſincerely loves you, and who owes himſelf to you.

J. J.

Lewes,
June 3, 1796.

LETTER IX.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND, AND KIND INSTRUCTOR,

MAY the beſt of bleſſings attend you, and may our good Lord crown you continually with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies, and may he hold you up againſt the hoſt of foes that you are ſurrounded with and muſt cut through, by the ſword of his Spirit, to the honour of his great and holy name, and to the comfort and eſtabliſhment of his little, little flock, in this kingdom; and to the confuſion now, and one day to the utter confuſion of theſe his enemies.

It may be truly ſaid of them, *Behold! ye deſpiſers! and wonder, and periſh; for I work a work in your day which ye will in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you!* But, bleſſed be God, not all; for ſome can thank God, from the heart, that ever he was pleaſed to raiſe you up amongſt us, according to his word, to confound the wiſdom of the (worldly) wiſe, and to bring to nothing the (pre-

tended) underſtanding of the prudent. They are zealouſly affecting one another, but not well; and, if God prevent not, ſo they will find it. Their outward pretence is againſt the man and his bad ſpirit, as they ſuppoſe; but the ground of it is, becauſe they cannot bear the light, neither will they come to it; and, in effect, it is ſaying you ſpeak by the ſpirit of Satan: ſo that I find it is not ſo much the man they are fighting againſt, as the ſpirit that ſpeaketh in the man; and all under a feigned pretence for the glory of God. Is Chriſt divided? No; bleſſed be his holy name he is not. It appears to me to be no leſs than doing deſpite to the Spirit of grace, or ſinning againſt the Holy Ghoſt. They are upon the verge of a precipice, which, if they get in, will drown them in deſtruction and perdition. "Woe unto them, for they are going in the way of "Cain, and running greedily after the error of Ba-"laam for reward, and will periſh in the gainſaying "of Korah! Theſe are ſpots in our feaſts of cha-"rity; bringing an evil report on the good land; "when they feaſt with us feeding themſelves with-"out fear; clouds without water carried about of "winds; trees whoſe fruit withereth, without fruit, "twice dead (dead ſpiritually here, and in God's "account dead eternally hereafter; and ſo they will "find it, when God ſhall pluck them up by the "roots); raging waves of the ſea foaming out their "own ſhame; wandering ſtars, to whom is re-"ſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever." I de-

clare

clare I tremble, while I write, at a view of their awful ſtate.

I lately ſaw a book that is publiſhed againſt you; but, bleſſed be God, he gave me eyes to ſee into the ſpirit of it. The author's drift ſeems to be intended to ſpoil your uſefulneſs as a preacher, under the pretended love of a friend. Satan may ſtalk about in his white robe and deceive many, but, bleſſed be God, he ſhall never finally deceive God's elect. We have had ſome ſpitfire work amongſt us concerning you, but it has turned out for good, as we begin to know who is on the Lord's ſide. It has had a good effect upon me; it has ſtirred up ſuch a zeal, which I hope is according to knowledge, that I have not lately felt, in ſtanding up in defence of the truth; I can ſpeak it without flattery, which I hate. I have found more love to you for the truth's ſake, ſince theſe things have happened, than I ever felt before; and have read your books, as it were, with new eyes, though they have hacked, cut, and ſmote me, and ſometimes comforted me. But comfort I ſeldom get any where, though others ſay they have been comforted by me. Your book entitled Living Epiſtles, and Light Shining in Darkneſs, have been made a bleſſing amongſt us. I heard ſome ſay that your Living Teſtimonies were a golden ſtore to them. I ſhall finiſh this part with David's prayer: "Keep back thy ſervant from preſumptu-
"ous ſins, let them not have dominion over me;
"then ſhall I be upright (in him), and I ſhall be
"innocent

" innocent from the great tranſgreſſion; and let the " words of my mouth, and the meditations of my " heart, be acceptable in thy ſight, O Lord, my " ſtrength and my Redeemer."

I ſhall now, my dear friend, attempt to give you ſome account how I have gone on ſince you was ſo kind as to ſend me your laſt letter, and may the Lord make me plain, ſimple, and honeſt in it; for I have a ſtrong propenſity in me to keep back ſome things from you that I go through, and alſo to put in others that I ought not; I find my heart deceitful, and deſperately wicked. I have been chiefly in darkneſs ſince I wrote to you laſt, except ſome ſmall intervals, when a bleſſed ray has darted into my ſoul, and I have felt as if it had diffuſed itſelf through my whole ſoul; it has been momentary, but very ſatisfactory for the time, and then all ſhut up again, and I, like Abraham, returned to my own place. Sometimes I have felt as if I had no changes, and have been, as it were, challenged to find a warfare in my ſoul, and, upon examination, I could not diſtinguiſh that I had; and from theſe ſenſations have drawn a concluſion that all was a blank, that I had been deceived into a profeſſion, and had only mocked God, and hitherto deceived his people, and really I felt as if I never had known the ways of God at all: this in the end has been a ſore travail. In this ſtate I have even longed for former experience, the terrors of the law, &c. but could not come at them, and have begged of God

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to begin his work in me. This ſeemingly indifferent ſtate has been worſe to me than all that I ever felt in all my life.—I remember, as I ſat at my work one day in this ſtate, ſadly troubled indeed reſpecting my ſoul (it was on the 9th of laſt November), I was praying earneſtly to the Lord to deliver me from every weight, and to reveal his Son in me, theſe words ſuddenly came into my mind, "*I will "ſhew thee great and mighty things that thou knoweſt "not.*" I thought they were ſurpriſing words, but I would let them alone till night, and then I would have a ſearch for them. Night came, but I could not find them at all; I ſearched betimes all next day, but I could not find them, and began to think it was from another quarter; however, at night, I thought I would once more ſearch, but in vain. I did not know what to do; I thought to myſelf, will it be preſumption to put up a petition to the Lord reſpecting it, to know if it came from him or Satan? The ſcriptures ſay, thought I, "that all things are "poſſible to him that believeth." However I put up a petition to the Lord nearly in theſe words: Lord, thou knoweſt I cannot find it; be pleaſed, if conſiſtent with thy divine will, if the paſſage came from thee, to direct me where to find it in thy word. I had ſome idea in my mind, and was going to look for the 33d chapter of Ezekiel and 33d verſe; but ſome how or other I made a miſtake, and turned to the 33d of Jeremiah, and fixed my eyes immediately upon it. I was aſtoniſhed to think I

was

was anſwered directly. But what great and mighty things theſe are, I know not, though I have not a doubt but I ſhall know hereafter. I told my wife, if the paſſage was from the Lord (which I had no reaſon to diſbelieve) I ſhould ſoon have Satan at me. Not long after, as I ſat by the fire muſing on theſe wonderful words, this was ſecretly, but powerfully, whiſpered to my mind, "This night thou ſhalt "die." I thought, can this be what the Lord means? I concluded it might, and to confirm it I began to feel as if death was making inroads upon me; I was all in a tremble, and began to feel very weak. I got up and began to walk about, but felt myſelf weaker and weaker, was ready to ſtagger in my walk, and was in a cold ſweat; I took ſome ginger, and got ſome camomile tea made, but I could not get rid of my feelings. As I walked about I began to conſider the words; I thought they ſaid, "This night I ſhall die;" but if it comes from God it muſt be according to his word, and I do not remember that there are ſuch words in the Bible. I ſuſpected what quarter it came from, began to cheer up a little, and ventured to defy the devil to find ſuch a paſſage in all God's book. The tempter began to leer off, and I really imagined I felt him leaving me; but my feelings did not altogether go off till I fell aſleep. Praiſed be God, I am now a living experimental witneſs that the devil is a liar. And although I thought I ſhould be tempted if it was from God, ſo blind was I when

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the temptation came, that at firſt I had no ſuch thought about it.

In the midſt of theſe toſſings to and fro, I one day came to Mr. B———'s, at G———, and there was a perſon at their houſe, one of our church, helping them; and I, as uſual, could not keep my mouth ſhut, though I often have wiſhed I could, and began to relate how things were with me. A day or two after I was informed, that while I was telling my experience to them, this perſon, who was in diſtreſs concerning her ſoul, was quite ſet at liberty, had all her doubts and fears cleared up; the way was quite open between God and her, the love of God was ſhed abroad in her heart, and ſhe expreſſed herſelf very clearly indeed, and is one that ſeems as if ſhe would declare it alſo amongſt God's children. She has no ifs about it, but is poſitive; ſo I muſt give it up, believing it to be genuine. But I remain ſtill in priſon, not one gleam for me. I tried to ſuck conſolation from it, but I could not; therefore ſhe ſang ſongs to a heavy heart.

I alſo came to another place one day, where was another of our church, not thinking any thing in the leaſt of uſefulneſs, and began to ſpeak my experience as uſual; this was ſet at liberty in the ſame manner (this alſo had been very much diſtreſſed for ſome time), and thanked and praiſed God that I ever came near them; for the Lord had done great things for them, and had made me the inſtrument, in his hand, whereby he choſe to deliver them. And I

dare not diſbelieve theſe things; for if I did, I know conſcience would teſtify againſt me. This cramps me; there was no comfort for me; I remained juſt the ſame, ſtill ſhut up; but they got what I wanted, and I had what they had loſt, and was like a fool before them in mine own eyes. I could ſee them ſhine; but it rather created jealouſy and murmuring, inſtead of "rejoicing with them that do re-"joice."

Another time I came to G———, and had occaſion to ſtay all night. The next morning I began to be rather diſſatisfied in my mind, becauſe I had not ſeen any traces of the hand of the Lord with me, and began to conclude that I had acted wrong in ſtaying, and to murmur at myſelf, &c. I came down ſtairs; Mrs. B—— being in the room, after we had exchanged a few words, ſhe began to weep bitterly. I aſked her the cauſe; ſhe ſaid it was her wicked ſinful heart that was the occaſion of it. On talking a little, I found that her views were, that ſhe could not be a Chriſtian, and, at the ſame time, feel herſelf ſuch a miſerable ſinner. I felt a ſecret pricking to be uſeful to her; I took hold of the Bible, for the ſecond time in this way, and endeavoured to explain, in my rough way, part of the 7th chapter of the Romans; and while I was doing this, the Lord bleſſed it to her ſoul, and made her as light as a feather, and ſhe told me afterwards that ſhe had a comfortable day of it: but was myſelf, all this time, in a very uncomfortable ſtate. Theſe

things I cannot account for, though you touched a little on them in one of your letters to me; but I hope you will be more full upon it; for I am afraid of being taken by Satan as an angel of light; almoſt every thing makes me ſtart.

Another thing I have wondered at, which is this: that at the ſame time ſome have been comforted by me in this dark ſtate, others have been cramped, and ſtaggered, and in ſome meaſure brought into bondage. Mr. B—— himſelf, who enjoys much conſtant conſolation, can hardly ſtand againſt me. This alſo has troubled me much, inſomuch that I have wiſhed I had never been near them. And I find a fear in me, leſt I ſhould bring thoſe that are in liberty into bondage.

I ſhall now give you my thoughts about my being a miniſter. Your kind letters, I muſt confeſs, have much weight with me, and I cannot altogether ſhake it off. I am ſet upon my watch-tower, to ſee what the Lord will ſay unto me. I hope the Lord will never ſuffer me to go before him, nor ſtay behind him; but that he will go before me, and alſo be my rereward, through this wilderneſs. Your charge is great, and the office is great; but, to be ſure, our God is greater than all; and, I am ſure, if it ever comes to paſs, it muſt be in God's power, not in my wiſdom; for, ſince theſe things have been about me, I have looked before now into the Bible to ſee if I could find any thing which I think miniſters muſt do;

but

but no, I could ſee nothing: ſo as to be able to deliver it publicly I have found no memory, ſcarce any light into the word, and have been confounded. A miniſter, thought I; no ſuch thing: for I can ſee others far enough before me in knowledge, in underſtanding, in gifts, &c.; yet, after all this, I cannot, dare not, altogether hold my peace; thoſe things before related cramp me, ſo when I am amongſt them I tell them, without a book, my experience and my feelings. I want no memory for that; for it is in me as plain ſometimes as it is to read a book, and this I know from painful experience. If ever it comes to paſs, my dearly beloved, it lays in the paſſage I lately had, " Great and mighty things." May the Lord's will, and only his, be done. Amen.

My dear friend, it is only formality to apologize about my writing to you, for write to you I muſt; and I hope you will not be offended at it. Be pleaſed to favour me with an anſwer to this, as full as you can; tell me all your thoughts. I ſhall, from time to time, acquaint you how I go on. O, my friend, I am thankful that I have a ſpiritual friend that I can make ſo free with; and I believe the Lord himſelf brought our acquaintance about for wiſe and good ends; for my good, and for his glory in the end. Give my love to your ſpouſe, and all that love Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity: and may the Lord bleſs you, and keep you up againſt all

your

your enemies. That, as you have done, and may yet do, witneſs a good confeſſion amongſt many brethren, is the prayer of one that loves you, I hope, in the truth, and for the truth's ſake.

A. R.

P. S. I have ſent a letter by this poſt to our dearly beloved friend Mr. Oxenham. My wife deſires her hearty love to you and yours, as alſo our other friends. I have given Mr. Oxenham a ſmall account how we go on. Pray, pray for us, my friend, that the Lord would ſend us a ſingle eye, that our little body may be full of light. I hope you will excuſe all blunders.

LETTER X.

To Mr. A. R——, at G——.

BELOVED OF GOD,

IT is with much difficulty that I can get time to ſend thee a ſcrap. The darkneſs which thou complaineſt of is only in part, my friend; it is not Egyptian darkneſs, nor the old vail of Sinai: for thou canſt ſee thyſelf, if thou canſt not ſee Chriſt; and diſcover the old man plain enough, if thou canſt not diſcern the new; and all things that are reproved, and made manifeſt, are reproved and made manifeſt by the light. Thoſe intervening rays you may call the day dawn, and the day ſtar: the ſhadows will ſoon flee away, the Lord will ſhine, and thou ſhalt riſe when the glory of God is riſen upon thee. Thoſe of the brighteſt experience have been ready to call the whole work of God upon them into queſtion, when under ſpiritual deſertions, in lukewarmneſs, or when buffeted by the adverſary: but the bruiſed reed muſt be bound up, in order to make melody; the ſmoking flax muſt blaze, that a pure incenſe and grateful praiſes may aſcend up before the throne: the good work ſhall be revived, the branch

branch muſt be purged, and the wind ſhall blow on the garden, that the ſpices may flow out, or elſe our great High Prieſt could not eat his pleaſant fruits. The Lord will do the work over and over again, until *the effect of righteouſneſs be peace and aſſurance for ever.* The ſame paſſage of ſcripture to which you allude, was once ſent in like manner to me, as is recorded in one of my pamphlets; with this difference only, the whole verſe came to me, *Call upon me, and I will anſwer thee, and ſhew thee great and mighty things which thou knoweſt not.* At that time I had been ſadly beſet by a child of Satan, who was in the damnable hereſy of Sabellianiſm, which I knew to be a lie, yet Satan ſorely haraſſed me with it; but it pleaſed God to make good his word to me, and that in open viſion, which fully diſcovered the artful fowler, broke his curſed ſnare, and ſent him off with all his infernal lies; while my ſoul felt itſelf ſweetly compoſed, becalmed, and ſettled, in my heavenly Father's love, and in my dear Redeemer's ſaving benefits, and in the comforting witneſs of God the Holy Ghoſt. The viſion, my ſon, will ſpeak in due time; wait for it: it is of the Lord, and will ſurely come; and bleſſed is he that believed, for there will be a performance of what is told him by the Lord.

The above-mentioned conflict with Satan hath been of great uſe to me (under God) in the miniſtry. For I believe that there is ſcarce a *depth of Satan,* which is publiſhed either by the Arians, the Soci-

nians, or Sabellians, which the devil did not ſuggeſt to my mind; and with theſe he puzzled, perplexed, and haraſſed my ſoul, more or leſs, for two or three years, all which time I kept on (confuſed and bewildered as I was) preaching againſt them. But when the Lord delivered me, I was at a point in judgment about the ſtate of ſuch men; I knew by the deliverance which God wrought out for me, and by the light and glory that followed upon it, that theſe heretics were never taught of God, nor influenced by his Spirit; but that they were influenced, actuated, and inſtructed, by the devil himſelf.

Once more.—I was, about twenty-three years ago, ſorely beſet by the adverſary in another way. I had preſented to my mind a multitude of ghaſtly figures; ſome human, ſome brutal, ſome partly human and partly brutal, and ſome infernal. I have been in the night, by the hour, in theſe chambers of imagery, with theſe images, figures, and ſpectres, before me; which troubled me not a little, until it pleaſed God to deliver me. However, when I came to London, I ſaw, in the *Britiſh Muſeum*, and ſince that in the collection of *Sir Aſhton Lever*, ſeveral heathen gods exactly like them: and here I ſaw where all idolatry began; it was conceived in the carnal mind under the filthy operations of Satan; hence the ſinner is charged with being a whore to the devil: *And they ſhall no more offer their ſacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring.* Lev. xvii. 7. And the heretic conceives by forming

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the ſame conjunction. Satan begets every hereſy that the children of men travail with and bring forth in this world: hence he is called, *the father of lies*; and theſe lies are called, *doctrines of devils*. Satan is the whoremonger, and the liar is the whore; what Satan begets, his ſtrumpet brings forth: juſt as Ananias and Sapphira did; *Why haſt thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghoſt?* Acts v. 3, 4. Here is both conception and pregnancy, conceiving and filling the heart; and to ſuch ſinners Satan is a familiar ſpirit (Deut. xviii. 11), and they have fellowſhip with devils, 1 Cor. x. 20.

It is true, violent temptations often follow the manifeſtations and communications of God—witneſs the temptations of Chriſt after the Father's teſtimony from heaven—*this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*; and Paul's thorn in the fleſh ſucceeded his viſion of the third heaven. I do not wonder at the forgetfulneſs of thy former aſſertions when the temptation came on. Satan is like an highwayman, when he comes (for both are thieves) there is no time for deliberation or recollection; his buſineſs requires haſte; he caſts the poor ſoul into confuſion, flurries him, and terrifies him, till he is ſmitten with aſtoniſhment, and affrighted; the ſoul gets into a haſty, peeviſh, and fretful temper, and knows not where it is, what it does, or what it ſays; juſt like a modeſt damſel who falls ſuddenly into the violent clutches of a ruffian. But when the rob-

bery is committed, and the aſſurance of heaven repairs our loſs, we ſtand aſtoniſhed at our own folly, to think that we ſhould make no better uſe of our arms, but ſo tamely ſubmit to be plundered by a criminal curſed of God and bound with chains. This conſideration, in former days, uſed to mortify me not a little; and I have ſecretly bantered, challenged, defied, and almoſt wiſhed him to make another attack while I was upon my watch and ſtood upon my arms, which was hardly ever the caſe; but as ſoon as I began to get ſecure in my ward, or drowſy on my duty, then he came ſo ſuddenly and ſo unſuſpected, that I had not ſo much as time to feel for either ſhield or ſword.

I am glad to hear that the Lord works by thee, though thou art determined never to work for him. He can load thee with afflictions for the conſolation and ſalvation of his people, 2 Cor. i. 5; and make *life work in them, and death in you.* You are bound, but the word of God is not bound; and when your ſoul becomes more liberal, and deviſes liberal things, by liberal things thou ſhalt ſtand. He that ſcatters ſhall yet increaſe, and he that waters ſhall be watered alſo himſelf; but he that withholdeth more than is meet, it tendeth to penury. I am fully perſuaded that the Lord hath raiſed thee up for ſuch a time as this; and, if thou altogether hold thy peace, then ſhall there enlargement and deliverance ariſe for Iſrael another way. In preaching the word the bow is drawn at a venture; the direction of the arrow,

row, the execution of it, the excellency of the power, and the different effects produced, are of God, not of us: my counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure; my word ſhall not return void, it ſhall accompliſh the end for the which it is ſent, and proſper in the thing that pleaſes me. They went forth and wrought, and the Lord worked with them, confirming the word with ſigns: they delivered his whole counſel, and left him to make application. A preacher doth not always communicate his own frame. I have known two friends come under the word together—one in deep diſtreſs of ſoul, the other in carnal eaſe; one was healed, and the other wounded; the ſame diſcourſe which led one to the Rock, plunged the other into the horrible pit. Sometimes, in deſcribing a child of God and the bleſſedneſs of his ſtate, another hath been enlightened to ſee that he had neither part or lot in that matter; he hath been convinced, judged, and condemned, and the thoughts of his heart made manifeſt. When an aſſembly meets together, one is in bondage, another in liberty; ſome comfortable, ſome in bitterneſs; one is tempted, another tried; one a backſlider, another is fixed; one under perſecution, and another under ſpiritual deſertion—and the word of the Lord is profitable for inſtruction, correction, reproof, and comfort—that each may have his portion of meat in due ſeaſon. Paul was enlarged, when the Corinthians were ſtraitened; his mouth was open, when their hearts were cloſed: one may

be joyful, and another jealous; one comes hungry and is filled, another comes full and is ſent empty away. The more you ſcatter, the more you will increaſe; and as you water others, your own well will ſpring, and flow freer and freer, and run purer and purer—the old veil and the weeds that are wrapped about thy head, will vaniſh and diſappear as the ſun riſes upon thee.

I am fully perſuaded that thy neck is intended for the yoke, and when thy will is reſigned to the will of the Lord thou ſhalt have the light of his countenance, and the teſtimony of his Spirit; but all the time thy face is ſet for Tarſus, the ſtorm will, more or leſs, purſue thee. And thus it ſhall be done to the man that refuſes to build his brother's houſe, and eſpecially the houſe of that brother that was born for adverſity; and that man's houſe ſhall be called, in Iſrael, the houſe of him that hath his ſhoe looſed; or the man, whoſe feet are not ſhod with the preparations of the goſpel of peace. Take it in the rough, time is precious with me; for I muſt work if you will not, and ſo ſhall you, or ſmart for it.

W. H. S.

Church-ſtreet, Paddington.

LETTER XI.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

REV. SIR,

I AM this morning, February 22, at Ninfield, and am now thinking what company there will be to-morrow at the doctor's houſe. I wiſh I could be there among them. My heart is there; and if I had but a pair of wings, I would drop in upon them early in the morning; but I am doomed to wander in the wealds of Suſſex, and have no power to come out of this wilderneſs. I cannot get as far as the metropolis. Nothing is to be heard in this country now, but the landing of the French. They are all in an uproar. When I left L——, the town was in a commotion. Several farmers' waggons were preſſed, &c. &c. This had ſpread ſuch a rumour, that ſeveral were ready to ſet off; others reported that the French fleet ſtood off Brighton. I know not what the Almighty is about to do, but I cannot believe, ſome how, that he will ſuffer the F—— now to land. You know he himſelf defeated their late

late attempt, and he is able yet to do it again. I have found lately power and liberty in my ſpirit to plead with him, and he ſuffered me to put in my plea with boldneſs, and I thought it was a ſtrong one. The ſhepherd's care is never more conſpicuous than at the time of yeaning; wolves and dogs are then particularly guarded againſt; and you know there is a little of this work going on now in England—here is a few, and though but a few, his promiſe is, to gather them with his arms, and to lead gently thoſe that are with young. But if we are to have their government, they will not then be led gently. I can ſee what we are to expect, by the ſample before me. But it is ſaid they will give liberty to all. This I do not doubt: they will give liberty to every one to knock his neighbour on the head, if he ſhould ſtand in his way. And doubtleſs they will give full liberty to Deiſts, Atheiſts, Socinians, Arians, Papiſts, Arminians, and Libertines; but the free Spirit of Jeſus they will never ſuffer to have his liberty, if they can prevent it—this they hate worſe than the devil himſelf. From their government may heaven ſave us all! I hope he yet will. It may not be too late; if all join in this buſineſs, who knows what we can do? Have you the ſubject on your mind? and have you any thing to propoſe on it? If you have, I wiſh to hearken to it.

I have ſome good news to tell you yet. I have ſeen ſome looking out of darkneſs ſince ***. My

dear

dear friend M. S——— is getting out, and hath ſhaken himſelf from the duſt. This is true, indeed; and I ſee it is in anſwer to many prayers. I have wreſtled hard for him, and I ſhall have him. He has been long in wrath and bitterneſs, but the oil is come down.

J. J.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

To the Rev. J. J———.

REV. SIR,

If I am not miſtaken, there is ſuch a place in Suſſex as *Ninfield Stocks*; I hope my dear friend is not detained there. In his laſt, the poor weather-beaten bark appeared to be almoſt ready to double the cape, but theſe tidings come from a colder climate; however, he will not go to the bottom for want of an anchor, nor aſhore for want of a cable. The aſpect of things in the preſent day is very gloomy, and it pleaſes God to keep us much in the dark about his great deſigns; yet we cannot ſay that *there is no more any prophet*, or that *we ſee not our ſigns*, or favourable tokens, though it is moſt certain that there is none among us that knoweth how long. That Antiochus was a type of the man of ſin, I have no doubt; and even the three years and a half of Iſrael's ſufferings under him, is brought in by the evangeliſt John, and is explained by weeks of years; which prophetic term of 1260 years, in which Zion is to remain in her obſcurity, the prophets to preach in ſackcloth, and antichriſt to reign,

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is attended with many difficulties. The conception of antichriſt near the centre of the apoſtolic age, the working of the myſtery of iniquity near the cloſe of it, the manifeſtation and open appearance of the man of ſin, muſt be conſidered in ſeveral diſtinct periods, and where to date his riſe from, I know not; whether from his firſt appearance, or from his firſt war with the ſaints; however the time of his continuance is plain enough. Many good men have fixed the time of his execution, but he has paſſed the time that they have appointed; they have erred in the time, but not in the thing; and perhaps this may have been permitted, in order to harden them the more, that they may conclude that the effect of every viſion is prolonged, that the joy of the hypocrite may be heightened, their carnal ſecurity completed, the ſeat of violence brought near, the evil day put far away, and ſhe boaſt I ſit as a queen, and propheſy nothing but peace and ſafety—when, in one hour, her judgment comes. Moreover, the eaſtern and our way of reckoning years differ not a little, as far as I can conceive; and as for the ſolar and lunar ſyſtems, I know but little of, and, though I find a great itching after theſe things, yet the daily labour that falls to my ſhare forbids it; and when I fain would make nine days a-week, to dive after theſe things in the night, when the hired labourer calls the time his own, yet here alſo I meet with another let, and that is my eyes wax dim, and threaten me with total darkneſs if I do not allow them to ſhut

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up ſhop by one o'clock in the morning, and I muſt inſiſt upon pulling the ſhutters down by five or ſix at the fartheſt. The times and ſeaſons the Father has put in his own power, and it is not for us to know them, unleſs he ſhould be pleaſed to reveal them, as he did in ſome particulars to Daniel. At the end the viſion ſhall ſpeak; fulfilling the prophecies is unſealing the book; and when we can compare the prophecy and the accompliſhment together, the viſion ſpeaks plain, ſo that he who runs may read it.

It is thought by many, that as Antiochus ſpread his pavilion between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, ſo his antitype will erect his tabernacle in Britain, which is between the ſeas alſo; and the preſent face of things appears to countenance the conjecture. However, the hour of temptation muſt come upon all that are called Chriſtians, to try them; which perilous hour to the righteous will be the laſt triumph of their great oppreſſor, and lead on to his final ruin: yet I cannot be brought to believe but what there is upwards of ſixty years to run out before that ſon of perdition goes to his own place. In theſe times we muſt be conſtant in ſeeking the Lord, and in walking and keeping cloſe to him: ſeek meekneſs, ſeek righteouſneſs, it may be we ſhall be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger. He counſels us to hold faſt both his goſpel and our profeſſion of it: *Hold faſt till I come*; and again, *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will*

will keep thee from the hour of temptation which ſhall come upon all the world to try them. We are in the hands of a good ally when we walk with God in peace and equity, and hold the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience; theſe are no ſmall ſupport in the field of battle.

For about ſix or ſeven months before the war broke out, I was ſorely exerciſed both day and night, and all about approaching calamities; there was nothing uppermoſt in my mind, nor before my eyes, but diſtreſs and trouble. At laſt, in a viſion of the night, I ſaw two armies on a large plain, and I was ſet to watch their motions and to carry tidings: I ſaw them engaged, and ran with tidings; and, to my aſtoniſhment, I ſaw a very high ſtone wall between me and the field of action. Soon after I had another awful ſight—ſeveral ſmall rivers filled with dead men ſlain in battle. And, about ſixteen months ago, or thereabouts, going to bed full of thought about the preſent times, the moment I awaked a voice ſpoke inwardly to my heart, *This is the hour of temptation*; but from whence it came I muſt leave, though I really thought it came from the great Shepherd. After I had been exerciſed with ſix or ſeven months ſore travail, I came forth from thoſe imaginary pains (no leſs painful than real) with much ſubmiſſion and quietude, and in a meaſure fortified, to meet what may be expected; as I well know that no poor creature upon earth has more enemies than I have. I hope to meet thee

daily

daily at the mercy ſeat, and that in the unity of the faith; and am not a little delighted with the good tidings of the poor Hebrews creeping out of their holes. Go on, the Lord is with thee; and, to thy comfort, I tell thee that my ſucceſs alſo is very great.

Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XIII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,

Grace, mercy, and peace, be multiplied.

I RECEIVED your kind inſtructing letter of March 4th, for which I return you my moſt grateful acknowledgment. I believe I ſhould have troubled you with a letter before now, but many obſtacles have been in the way; but moſt of all unbelief on the one hand, and a fear of preſumption on the other, have worried and perplexed my ſoul ſorely, ſo that I have gone bowing down my head like a bulruſh. Ifs and buts are cutting things to me, and alſo diſhonourable to God. I have gone ſo far as to fear that the Lord had never begun the good work in my ſoul at all, and that I had deceived others and myſelf alſo, and have prayed the Lord to begin the good work now. I have endeavoured to go back, in theſe terrible times, to paſt experience; and there I have been baffled alſo. I have looked at my firſt convictions, but it has been repreſented that they were only natural convictions, and that I never

never ſaw ſin exceeding ſinful, nor in its true light; that I never had a godly ſorrow for ſin, nor that mourning on the account of ſin which is peculiar to the ſaints; therefore they were not convictions by the Spirit of the Lord. I have anſwered, that they led me to pray to the Lord, and that, from a feeling ſenſe of my loſt condition (terrible and long as they were), that they might not go off but by the precious blood of Jeſus Chriſt. I alſo anſwered, Did not this prove that, at that time, the Lord had granted me a new covenant-bleſſing, " his fear in " my heart," that they ſhould not go off but by the blood of Chriſt. It came again: it was only a prayer while his chaſtening was upon me, and that he only mocked when my fear came; and in this way have I been, till I have been wearied and confounded. I then flew, I thought, to a more ſure teſtimony, I mean the day of my eſpouſals; which has many times kept me up: for St. Paul ſays, they may have many things, and having not charity, or love, they are nothing. I put the queſtion, Have I not had the love of God ſhed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghoſt? which at that time took away that ſlaviſh fear of hell and damnation, and it has never returned (though, poor wretch, I have deſired it) to this preſent period. To the laſt it was anſwered—when God's chaſtening hand was off me I fell aſleep again in carnal ſecurity, and the reſt that I felt was in myſelf, not in him. And to the firſt it was anſwered—it was nothing but the joy

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of a hypocrite or Arminian, which I have ſeen thanking and praiſing God from day to day, as if in the liberty of the goſpel, but it was rejoicing only in a thing of nought; and here I have been ſorely put to it, and, " being in darkneſs and having no " light," it has left behind a ſecret ſuſpicion, and a jealouſy which is cruel as the grave, and till the Lord is pleaſed of his mercy to remove it my life will hang in doubt.

My dearly beloved friend, let me crave an intereſt in your prayers, from a feeling ſenſe of my need; for I know that the effectual fervent prayer of W. H. S. S. availeth much, as has been proved to me concerning that woman at G———, which was mentioned in a former letter. The prayer-meeting which ſhe held in oppoſition to us is broke up, but what has been the occaſion of it I cannot learn; the firſt cauſe I know, but cannot learn the ſecond. She is alſo made manifeſt to another perſon, who I have great reaſon to believe is a Chriſtian, and who has helped to ſupport her by her pocket. I do believe the Lord is making her manifeſt very faſt, praiſed be his name for that. I am often tempted to believe that the love I experienced at my deliverance from the gulph of black deſpair, was not attended with thoſe ſoul-debaſing, God-exalting, views, as is experienced by Chriſtians; that it was not attended with that ſympathy for Jeſus Chriſt as is mentioned in Zech. xii. 10. " They ſhall mourn for him as " one that mourneth for his only ſon; and ſhall be

" in bitterneſs for him as one that is in bitterneſs " for his firſt born."—May the Lord make you willing and able to give cloſe anſwers. I ſhall ſay no more on this ſubject at preſent, but ſhall proceed, hoping you will ſend me a few lines in as ſhort a time as poſſibly you can. And may the Lord direct you. Amen.

My heartfelt prayer is, " Search me, O God, " and know my heart; try me, and know my " thoughts, and ſee if there be any wicked way in " me, and lead me in the way everlaſting."

There is Mr. Thomas B——, &c. &c. &c. who deſire to expreſs their love, gratitude, and affection to you, as an inſtrument in the hand of God, for our beloved M. O——'s viſit among us. I believe he has been made uſeful in ſome ſenſe or other to us all: ſome have been comforted, ſome reproved, and ſome eſtabliſhed; our eyes are completely opened to ſee into a certain deſcription of miniſters as they never were before; it has taught us the difference between a miniſter of the letter only and one of the Spirit; or, if you pleaſe, a miniſter of Satan and one of the Lord's. He ſpeaks as one having authority, and not as our modern, letter-learned, ſchool-taught, ſcribes; he is ſweetly in the liberty of the goſpel both in preaching and in ſpeaking in private; and, oh, how do I long to be in it myſelf, the glorious liberty of the children of God! It ſounds and vibrates in my heart, and I hope, one day, the Lord will grant my requeſt, that I ſhall

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ſteadily enjoy it myſelf. At preſent I am at war with a whole hoſt of enemies, and am afraid I often attack them in my own ſtrength. Legality is a terrible foe to me; but I muſt leave off here, and begin on another ſubject.

In your love and kindneſs to us, you ſent Mr. B—— a letter, the contents whereof made me tremble; the awful charge you gave me, and that in the preſence of God, and at my peril if I refuſed; and your ſpeaking ſo poſitively that God would bleſs us in this way: feeling myſelf ſo very weak (which this letter will prove), has laid me under freſh difficulties that I little thought of, and I think I have ſuſpected my own ſtate being ſafe more ſince that letter came than I did before. It has brought ſuch thoughts as theſe.—How can I deſcribe the real convictions of a child of God, while I ſuſpect the reality of my own? And how can I deſcribe the everlaſting diſcriminating love of God which is ſhed abroad in the ſinner's heart, after he has paſſed under the rod, when the day of his eſpouſals is come, at the feaſt of fat things; and, at the ſame time, ſuſpect my own ſtate? It cannot be. I thought, if my dear friend had known me, he would not have ſaid ſo much about my being uſeful in future, or laid ſuch a charge upon me; beſides, very often I cannot ſee any thing in the ſcriptures from one end to the other: I have looked and read, and at laſt have ſhut the book and gone away grievouſly diſappointed, moping and mourning

about like a loſt ſheep. At times, as I wrote to you before, I have had great liberty when I have been among the children of God, and have been at a certainty in what I have ſaid; at other times I have been quite ſhut up, and if I have attempted to ſpeak, I have met with a cutting reproof, ſo that I cannot tell what to make of theſe things. I read the 9th of the Acts, as it happened, one day, and I felt that part of it with ſome weight which ſpeaks of Ananias's going to Paul; and I thought, if you had any ſuch knowledge reſpecting me and I refuſed, woe be to me if I diſobeyed, for I am afraid of the Lord's rod; he can lay on a moſt dreadful heavy hand, though he doth not mean to deſtroy; this I know by experience. And, on the other hand, to run unſent I ſee as dreadful; for he would ſay, Who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts as a teacher? and this would bring the rod alſo. So that you ſee, my dear friend, that my difficulties are complicated; but, in the midſt of all, may his will, and his only, be done.

While I am writing, it ſtrikes my mind that there are ſix people, in ſix different towns about us, that will have it that I have been made uſeful to them; and I do believe ſome of theſe will be my greateſt troublers concerning this matter, eſpecially as Mr. B—— doth not ſeem to be much diſpoſed to keep your letter a ſecret, which I deſired him to do. Some of them ſeem greatly pleaſed with your letter, and are on my back already. I tell them that I do

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not find thoſe things in me which muſt accompany a teacher; nevertheleſs, I hope (I tell them) to lie in the balance of God's will reſpecting the matter. I referred them to Paul's experience, where he ſaw his call clear both as a Chriſtian and a miniſter; and if ever this was the caſe with me, they might expect to hear further of me. Pray, my dear friend, that, if it is the Lord's will, in his own due time it may be made manifeſt; alſo, if it is not his will, it may be the ſame: for I can be very well content if I am permitted to ſit in the loweſt ſeat amongſt his beloved ones.

I have one thing or two more to mention to you, if you will be pleaſed to bear with me, though I think, by this time, I have pretty well tired your patience. You may, perhaps, throw ſome light upon it, if it is from the Lord. It is as follows.—The day that our dearly beloved friend O—— left us, as I was getting ſome beans for my family in my garden, a frame came over my ſoul that, to my knowledge, I never experienced before, and how to deſcribe it I ſcarce can tell: my ſoul ſeemed to be ſhut up from the world, and from every thing of time and ſenſe; that is, nothing of the world had any weight with me, and I could pay attention to nothing but it. I ſeemed as if in travail to bring forth; it was attended with pain, yet mixed with pleaſing ſenſations; a ſpirit of prayer attended it, my whole ſoul was prayer, and I could ſcarce tell what about. The tenor of my prayer, as I went

about, was in ſuch words as theſe:—Lord, deliver me—Lord, keep me from error—Lord, have mercy on me—Lord, direct me into all truth—Lord, let thy will be done—Lord, ſuffer me not to be carried away with enthuſiaſm; with many ſuch expreſſions as theſe. This is a faint idea of it, for it was better felt than I can expreſs it. However, I went up ſtairs, and fell down on my knees before the Lord, to beg him, if he pleaſed, to make me underſtand what was his meaning; thereby two ſcriptures came to my mind while I was at prayer: the firſt was this—"Rejoice, O daughter of Zion!" and the other was, "Be in pain to bring forth, O daughter "of Zion!" That word, "be in pain," and "la- "bour to bring forth," ſeemed to be a little like my experience; but what was, or is to be, brought forth, I know not. I prayed to the Lord that I might not bring forth wind. This continued, at times, a day or two; but what it means I cannot tell. If there are any traces of it in the courſe of your experience and God's gracious dealings with you, I hope you will be enabled to throw ſome light upon it. I ſhall not trouble you with much more at the preſent, only beg that you will for once, as early as you can, be pleaſed to pay attention to this confuſed jumble of a letter, and I ſhall take it as a moſt ſingular kindneſs indeed. I am ſorry to hear of your preſent trouble, &c. &c. May the Lord, of his infinite mercy, deliver you, and all thoſe that are Jeſus Chriſt's, that may be entangled

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in the net. If ever you find opportunity to come among us, I hope you will not wait for an invitation in particular, for we ſhall at any time be glad to ſee you; only write us a letter before you come. My love to you and yours; likewiſe to Mr. O—— and his, and I hope ſhortly to hear of his ſafe arrival in town. My wife joins with me in the ſame. May the beſt of bleſſings attend you. Amen.

From your loving and affectionate brother

(I hope) in the Lord,

A. R.

LETTER XIV.

To Mr. A—— R——.

BELOVED OF GOD,

Grace, mercy, and peace, be with thee, through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

If thou thinkeſt to bring infidelity over to the divine ſtandard, or if thou art in expectation of the old man becoming loyal to Chriſt, thou art labouring in vain; that Ethiopian will never be white, nor wilt thou change one ſpot of that leopard. He is in alliance with none but Satan, who is never divided againſt himſelf. If he was, how could his kingdom ſtand? The Lord enlightens us; but Satan tries to blind our eyes, to keep the glorious light of the goſpel out. Satan aims to rock us to ſleep; the Lord empties us from veſſel to veſſel, that we may not ſettle upon our lees, or get carnally ſecure. If thou waſt a hypocrite, Satan would be divided againſt himſelf, if he was to tell thee of it: this would be acting againſt his own intereſt, whoſe buſineſs is *to keep his goods in peace*, and not to diſquiet his own houſe. In ſhort, to nurſe pride and buffet the humble; to nouriſh a falſe hope and oppoſe

poſe a good one; to beget and embolden preſumption, and to weaken faith; to countenance diſſembled love, and to damp and chill the love of God by the ſtirrings of corruption; to make hypocrites rage and be confident, and to make the ſaint ſtagger at the promiſe; to ſet the Phariſee to thank God he is not as other men, and the ſaint to be unthankful for what he has, by complaining the Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten me: this, this is the work of Satan; and as he is ſuch a ſworn enemy to God, it is not in his nature to act otherwiſe. Jealous ſuſpicion is the complaint of the holy ſpouſe; but there muſt be ſome love or liking where this jealouſy operates: for why ſhould I burn in the injured lover's fire, if I am not rivalled in the object loved. It was the loſs of the heavenly lover's embraces, and the joy of the daughters of Jeruſalem, that threw the ſpouſe into her fits of love-ſickneſs; ſhe could not bear to ſee the daughters rival her, who had been ſo long in a ſtate of wedlock. But this diſorder makes us ſearch and ſeek the more after him; *now will I ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth:* and it makes us prize him the more when we find him; *I found him whom my ſoul loveth, I held him faſt and would not let him go:* and it makes us more careful not to offend him; *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, not to ſtir, nor awake my love till he pleaſe.*

The text Zech. xii. 10, is ſpoken chiefly of the Jews, at their future reconverſion, which is yet to

come; and although a godly ſorrow muſt be found in all that are ſaved, Hezekiah and Job went on long without it, and both were in the faith of Chriſt, and both came to this when the furnace of affliction had tried them and purged them. God hath given you an honeſt and a good heart; you look well to your way, and ponder the path of your feet, and I hope that you will keep on, ſo that all your thoughts may be eſtabliſhed; you neither ſhun the light nor flee from it, and this is doing the truth. The objections and excuſes you make againſt opening your mouth for God, have no weight with me, nor have they any with your conſcience; you are not going to take the charge of an eſtabliſhed people, who require every myſtery of the kingdom to be held forth in the ſtrongeſt point of light. The ſtrong faith, flaming love, and aſſurance, that you talk of, was not found in one of the twelve apoſtles when firſt ſent out by Chriſt; nor in the heart of one of the twice ſeventy which the Lord ſent out before; nor yet in Paul, who, feeling the terrors of the Lord, warned ſinners day and night, for three years, with tears. Paul was to be a miniſter of what he had ſeen, and of other things—*for the which I will appear unto thee*; we are to miniſter as of the ability which God giveth; an alarmed ſoul can ſound an alarm; one in terrors can perſuade men; a doubtful ſoul can ſympathize with the doubtful, the weak with the weak, the tempted with the tempted, the deſerted with the deſerted; Paul was obliged to become

come all things to all men; and others, in ſuch caſes, edified each other, and bore each other's burdens. Theſe ſix perſons are a prelude to your future ſucceſs; you know it, and your conſcience laſhes you for your frivolous excuſes. As for the gale from the heavenly hills, it appears to me to be a divine motion to induce you to comply with my injunction; you muſt propheſy, and then the wind will blow on the ſlain. How are the daughters of Zion to rejoice unleſs their ſalvation cometh? and how are they to believe or hear without a preacher? and how ſhall ſhe labour to bring forth, if no preacher to travail in birth until Chriſt be formed in her children? However, I muſt leave this with God and your conſcience, and ſhould not wonder if ſome ſore conflict befall thee, if thou altogether hold thy peace at ſuch a time as this. As to my coming to G———, I never will, until your hand is on the plough, and then perhaps I may. My kind love to all friends. Excuſe haſte; while I remain,

Yours to ſerve in Chriſt Jeſus,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XV.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I MUST write a few lines to you to day, though I think I have but very little to tell you. I am not able to form any judgment of myſelf; nor do I know where I am, or what I am; a periſhing ſinner I certainly am, but whether my hope is true or falſe I do not know. I experience various changes: ſometimes I am much oppreſſed with heavineſs and darkneſs; feel a burden on my ſpirits ready to ſink me; the plague of my heart, the confuſion of my mind, the importance of the work, my incapacity for it, and above all the doubtful ſtate of my ſoul, make me ready to wiſh that I never was born. Under this weight I can hardly at times ſtand, and have often reſolved to give up all; but again I am a little eaſed, and after this will follow two or three days reſpite; then I am at it again, and ſomehow find more ſtrength than ever; this ſo encourages me, that I am ready to conclude that the worſt is over, that the Lord gently leads me, and

and will by degrees bring me into his preſence; but when my diſtreſs again returns, then I conclude that the bitterneſs of death is not yet paſſed, that I muſt go deeper than ever; the which, like a coward, I greatly dread, and yet want to know the worſt. Sometimes, eſpecially of late, I have found my old crimes (in which I long indulged myſelf, and that againſt the rebukes of conſcience) ſtirred up, and am haunted and haraſſed by them for days together, and greatly fear I ſhall one day fall. Theſe things are bitter plagues to me; I have cried to the Lord againſt them, and, in anſwer to theſe poor petitions, he has abated their force, and has taken them away for weeks together; but now and then they will be ſhewing themſelves again, as if they would let me know that they are not dead; but I cry again, and am helped: and I think the Lord's promiſe to Paul has, in ſome meaſure, been verified in me, viz. *His ſtrength made perfect in my weakneſs*; and at times I have been able to defy the devil, and tell him to his face that his labour is vain, that *I ſhall not fall*; and the words of the Saviour to Peter have been often ſweet to me—*I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* If you recollect, I hinted at ſome of them to you the laſt time I was at your houſe, and you touched upon them in prayer before we parted, and, God knows, I have not found the ſtrength of them ſo much ſince; whereas, on my

my road to town, I never was ſo miſerably haraſſed with them before.

There is one thing, in a letter of yours to a young man, that I have often wiſhed as well as you, viz. that it had pleaſed God to keep me from ſin in the days of my youth. I then had a tender conſcience; but bad company and evil practices hardened it; and a profeſſion of religion, without the power of it, almoſt ſeared it: this ſerved as a cloak to many things that conſcience would not bear with in the days of my youth; and this I expect to rue as long as I live, and I am afraid the ſword will never depart from my houſe.

Accounts abound with me of the books being much bleſſed to many. I believe they are read day and night, and I cannot find one that repents buying the book. Thoſe letters between you and me I find are moſt peruſed yet, and indeed they ſeem as if they had received freſh courage from them, and arguments to reply againſt their adverſaries. There is one thing you have ſaid that they all witneſs to; viz. "that many have kept a "jealous eye upon me, fearing that I ſhould be "enlarged, and they left bound." This they all confeſs with one conſent; and if at any time I have gone a little higher than uſual, then they have trembled: but is not this ſtrange, that they ſhould rather hear me ſtammering in my fetters, than

preach the liberty of the goſpel? But I muſt leave off, as I am going again to-day to work in the country—a poor workman, truly! May the God of heaven bleſs you, and proſper you, is the hearty prayer of,

Your much obliged friend,

J. J.

LETTER XVI.

To the Rev. J. J———.

REV. SIR,

My ſon is ſtill alive, though he can form no judgment of himſelf, and though he knows not where he is; it is Abraham's path, my ſon, who *obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.* Chriſt will find the loſt ſheep, if it cannot find him; for he leads us in paths that we have not known. But we ſhall know both what he does, and where he leads, hereafter, when he makes darkneſs light before us, and crooked things ſtraight. If my ſon knows where he is, and what he is, he cannot be loſt.

The oil of joy is promiſed for a ſpirit of heavineſs, light to the blind, reſt for the heavy laden, a phyſician for the plague, order for confuſion, a mouth and wiſdom for the miniſtry, and divine ſufficiency for them that know they are not ſufficient for theſe things. But this poor child of mine dreams of all-ſufficiency in himſelf; looking to the hills from whence cometh our help, and to the Lord for grace and ſtrength in every time of need, ſeems to be too dazzling a proſpect for his near ſight.

Never

Never reſolve either to give all up, or hold all faſt; for thou canſt do neither. "I will be their "God, and they ſhall be my people," is the language of the better covenant from end to end, and ſhall ſtand faſt from everlaſting to everlaſting, let men's reſolutions be what they may. Job, in the furnace, poſſeſſed the iniquity of his youth as well as you. Nathan told David, *God hath put away thy ſin*; and yet he laboured and cried long under the venom and guilt of it. It is one thing for God to view my crimes cancelled by the Surety, and it is another thing for him to let me feel and enjoy it. Jealouſy offerings were to bring iniquity to light; inquiſitions muſt be made, and iniquity ſearched out, and found to be hateful, and we muſt ſuffer under a ſenſe of them, and ſmart for them, that we may *remember our affliction and our miſery, the wormwood and the gall*; that we may have a ſympathy for the Saviour, and feel, in a ſmall degree, his intolerable ſufferings for us; this, under the influence of grace, makes the conſcience tender, excites gratitude, and fills the ſoul with pious grief when we offend him, or hear others diſhonour him. There is a peculiar mark of protection ſet upon ſuch *as ſigh and cry for their own ſins, and for the abominations that are done in the land*, and ſuch ſhall not fall in the common deſtruction.

To quit ourſelves like men, to reſiſt the devil ſteadfaſt in the faith, and give no ground to him, well becomes every ſoldier that God has armed.

And " to defy him, and tell him to his face that his " labour is in vain," is doubtleſs a very heroic act in my ſon. *Nevertheleſs, rejoice not in this; but rather rejoice becauſe thy name is written in heaven.*

It doubtleſs is a peculiar favour, like *Joſeph* and *Timothy*, to be called young; their cords and yokes are not ſo ſtrong as ours, nor may their old vices ply them ſo cloſe and hard as ours do; yet we are the greateſt debtors to grace.

It is not ſtrange at all, my ſon, " that the flock " chooſes rather to hear you ſtammering in your fet- " ters, than to preach liberty." If they were free, they would like to hear of freedom; but to ſee *Naphtali a hind let looſe*, while *Iſſachar crouches down between two burdens*, is, like Joſeph's many-coloured coat, a provocation to jealouſy; and who can reſt contented when ſcorched with ſo vehement a flame?

I have no doubt but the reproach and ſlander caſt upon thee, will ſpread abroad the report of the good hand of God upon thee, *while the ointment of thy right hand will betray itſelf.*

When the pulpits in London were ringing perpetual peals againſt antinomianiſm and a bad ſpirit, they rung ſo many bees down to my hive, that we were obliged to ſpend twelve hundred pounds to enlarge it. The place is too ſtrait for us now; and there are many that are willing to go again to Jordan to fetch beams, if we had but ground to lengthen the cords upon. However, God's word ſhall have free courſe, it ſhall run and be glorified, and accompliſh

pliſh the end for which it is ſent. We muſt dare to be ſingular, and not ſay—a confederacy. Theſe combinations and connections conſiſt, not of evangeliſts, but ſpies; and thoſe who wiſh to be thought men of candour will not reſiſt; ſo that the truth of the goſpel continues with but few; nor are theſe kept in joints and bands by truth, love, and goſpel ſimplicity, but by policy; not in defence of the power of godlineſs, but againſt it; to eclipſe every heavenly ray, and quench every living coal that comes from the altar of burnt-offering. Our ſouls muſt not come into their ſecret, unto their aſſembly we muſt not be united. Singularity in our day is breaking through the bounds of the fear of man, which brings a ſnare. We ſhall not be drove to countenance this and that ſcheme, againſt light and conſcience, to gratify *Alexander* the copperſmith; nor blunt the edge of God's ſword for fear of offending *Diotrephes*, who fights for pre-eminence. We muſt know no man after the fleſh. It is true, we ſhall not paſs for men of moderate principles, nor will our names be embalmed with the ſweet perfumes of candour and lenity; yet we ſhall have the approbation of God, the power of his Spirit, the bleſſings of the goſpel of peace, the teſtimony of an honeſt conſcience, and ſhall be made manifeſt in the conſciences of all good men, yea and wicked men too; *and theſe are things that accompany ſalvation.*

My ſon, let me have joy of thee; give thy mind to reading and ſtudy, be much in private, watch the

hand of God upon thee, and the leadings of his providence with thee; compare ſpiritual works within, with ſpiritual words in the book; and take heed to, and cleanſe thy way by, that rule; indulge not ſleep, leſt thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou ſhalt be ſatisfied with bread; ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; that is the beſt entrance that is attended with the greateſt difficulties, and that which is the hardeſt to get is the moſt valued when obtained; every virtue that the hand of faith fetches from his fulneſs is an ineſtimable gem, and an eternal trophy. My love to all that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity and truth; by all means the Lord be with thy ſpirit.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XVII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

BELOVED FRIEND, AND COMPANION IN TRIBULATION,

Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour.

I RECEIVED your kind letter of ———, and glad I am that you are recovered from your late indiſpoſition; for, had the Lord been pleaſed to lay you aſide, the Philiſtines would have ſhouted, but poor Zion would have ſuffered a great loſs; the bond children would have rejoiced, but the children of God would have mourned; the proud would have been happy, but the children of the kingdom would have been afflicted. But bleſſed be God, that doeth all things well, eſpecially in that he has condeſcended to reſtore you again to his beloved ones.

As I ſaid before, I received your kind letter, for which I would return you my warmeſt thanks; it lays me under great obligations to you, but I hope you will excuſe my not deſcending to particulars at this time, for want of room; ſuffice it to ſay, it

gives me ſome conſolation to find that I ſee in ſome meaſure eye to eye with you. I found ſatisfaction where you are ſpeaking from the 145th Pſalm, that the ſaints are privileged to ſpeak of the kingdom, and talk of the power, and to make known to the ſons of men his mighty acts, &c. I was juſt at this time thinking that I was a bold, daring, preſumptuous wretch; I was taking a view of what had paſſed in a late journey to S—— (which I ſhall relate to you), with what boldneſs I ſpake there, but, as I now thought, impudence; and, being dark in my ſoul, as I ſaid before, I concluded that I was a daring, bold rebel for thus doing: but theſe words gave me to ſee that a private believer is privileged to ſpeak of ſuch things; and, as I had not attempted to ſpeak from a text, which I never found myſelf capable of, therefore I could not charge myſelf with running as a preacher unſent of God; and it is my continual prayer that I never may, for whenever I look into myſelf the point is ſettled at once. I have often wiſhed in my mind that theſe things had never come out, for I have ſeen the people ſometimes at G——— as if they were looking and expecting a bleſſing through me as an inſtrument, and even ſome of them waiting for it with anxious deſire, and I myſelf dark, dead, lifeleſs, and diſtreſſed; but I have comforted myſelf in this, that the Lord had not called me to preach to them, nor had I ever myſelf given them room to think ſo; therefore I have thought with myſelf I would ſit ſtill and ſay nothing,

nothing, and would watch; ſo when we have come together, I have more than once obſerved, that we have all been ſilent for a ſeaſon, as if there had been nobody in the room; this has made me very uneaſy and troubled in ſpirit concerning it. What! thought I, wont none of you ſpeak? and have been pettiſh in my mind at it. What! ſhall I ſpeak, and have got nothing on my mind? No, thought I, I wont; for the Lord has not called me to ſpeak, and there is enough of thoſe that have done that already, that have ſaid, and the Lord never ſaid by them, and it may therefore be a ſnare of Satan, that I may be puffed up with my fleſhly mind, and ſo at laſt fall into the condemnation of the devil; for I ſometimes feel pride like a mountain of braſs: beſides, thought I, I have, in times that are paſt, not been able to anſwer the charges that have been brought againſt me for ſpeaking already, for upon trial I could not remember what I had been ſaying. I have reaſoned with myſelf thus: perhaps I had been ſpeaking lies, or leading the children of God into error, or bringing forth ſome new doctrine or ſome deluſion, and that the whole of it aroſe from nothing elſe but my own vanity. O! think I, how ſhocking is this, if it is true! and judging, from my own weakneſs, it might be poſſible, and with theſe things I have been quite confounded, and have wiſhed I never had known them, but had remained a private Chriſtian, in a corner, all the days of my life; and have begged of the Lord, ſooner than this ſhould

be

be the caſe, that he would ſtop my mouth, and not ſuffer me to go on contrary to his will; and this I have done in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, and have gone ſo far as to tell the people never to expect any thing from me, but ſome of them have contradicted me to my face; yet for all this ſome word has come acroſs that has fired my ſoul, that zeal for God has taken place, I have had liberty of ſpeech, all the darkneſs has fled (nay, even forgotten for the time) as if it had never been, and nothing has been thought on but the glory of God, and the welfare of God's dear children; and when this has been over, I have found myſelf gradually ſinking into my old ſtate again; but this is, no doubt, for wiſe and good ends, though it is uncomfortable beyond deſcription. Theſe things convince me alſo of the truth of your obſervation, that ſalvation, and the miniſtry of it, are not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth; it is not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

I have begged of God lately (betimes), that if he had deſigned me for uſefulneſs, even as a private believer, that he would fulfil his bleſſed promiſe in Iſaiah lii. 12; that he would not ſuffer me to go out with haſte, nor go by flight; but that he would (if this was his bleſſed will) go before me, and that he would be my rereward. I will (God willing) tell you, my beloved friend, how he was pleaſed, lately, to anſwer this prayer, in the joy of ſome people's

people's hearts, and my own alſo, and I hope it will be a joy to you.

S———, as I told you in a former letter, was the place where the Lord firſt appeared the health of my countenance and my God; it is a place where there is a deal of profeſſion, there is what they call the goſpel preached both in the church and in the chapel, and, to take it in the outſide view of it, it appears a garden incloſed indeed; but I firmly believe that a deal of the profeſſion ſtands in the enticing words of man's wiſdom, and not in demonſtration of the ſpirit and of power. The laſt time but one that I was there, the people that uſed to be ſo kind and ſo glad to ſee me, looked very ſhily at me, ſo far that I found I muſt go no more there; and that becauſe I had embraced (what they term) your tenets, which they are induſtriouſly taught to think are deſtructive to the church. It was a ſteepleſied gentleman in that place that firſt acquainted me with the name of Mr. Huntington, and how he had diſturbed the little hills of Zion by his dangerous doctrine and bad ſpirit; and I think he told me that he had broke ſome paſtor or paſtors hearts; ſo, by this means, I was prejudiced againſt you (as I believe many are, at this time, by the ſame inſtrument), before I had ever known you, or ſeen any of your writings; and I was thankful for the caution, till the Lord was pleaſed to open my eyes: firſt, by your Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer providentially falling into my hands, and reading part

of it before I knew the author; but, finding ſomething that fitted, and ſuited, and being attended with an unction, I naturally looked to ſee who was the author; and who ſhould it be, but the very man that I had been ſo cautioned againſt; ſo the ſcales fell off my eyes, and I preſently knew who was on the Lord's ſide.

This gentleman has been, and is at this time, very induſtrious to prejudice people's minds againſt both you and your books; I heard him ſay myſelf, that by your not making the law a rule of life, you overturned nineteen parts out of twenty of the ſcriptures. This man's tongue has been the occaſion of Mr. B——'s ſending him two letters. And ſo, what with the cool treatment of ſome of the people, and theſe letters (for if I went to S——, I muſt go to the houſe where he was, and in conſideration of my own inability to contend with him), I concluded I would not go at all, at leaſt for the preſent. But lately, a kinſman of my wife's came down from London, who, I hope and truſt, is a Chriſtian, and Providence ſo ordered it, that he is working at his trade at S——, and has been very buſy in circulating your books (by which means ſome of their eyes are open), which has given the alarm to the people in the Sand Bank; a caution is given to them, and an injunction is laid upon them, to ſhun both the books and the propagators of them, for they have been tried by their judgment, and been laid in the balance of their pride, and are

found wanting; therefore with ſuch an one, no, not to eat.

In this ſtate of things, the young man ſent for me ſeveral times to come over; but my anſwer was, that I could not ſee my way clear, but I would come over as ſoon as I could conceive it was the Lord's will; for I know if the Lord is not in it, nothing good can be done. This word I ſent to him from G———, the ſabbath-day before I received your kind letter; and on the Tueſday following I went over; for when I got home from G——, on the Monday morning, there had been a meſſage from S——, acquainting me that this young man had ſuddenly dropt down as dead in the chamber where he worked, and that my wife's brother, which this young man was working with, was alſo ſo ill that they did not expect his recovery; and this circumſtance brought me over to S——. When I came there, I found the young man perfectly recovered, and he and myſelf went out in the evening to a perſon's houſe where ſix or ſeven of us were together, but moſt of them prejudiced againſt you and your writings; however I had not been long before I found ſuch liberty in ſpeaking, that I was aſtoniſhed at myſelf; and what I enforced I felt with ſuch power in my own ſoul, that I could have ſaid (as John Bunyan did, if it had been lawful), I was more than ſure that what I advanced was truth; and the chief of my drift lay in enforcing the neceſſity of the power of godlineſs to be known and felt by

by each individual for himſelf; and how that the faith of profeſſors of religion ſtands only in the wiſdom of men; and that the poor weaklings of Chriſt's flock get entangled by theſe miniſters of Satan transforming themſelves as the miniſters of righteouſneſs, and by what means the Lord ſometimes takes to bring them out, &c. &c. I think I never felt ſuch power in my life; I had it with ſuch clear evidence to myſelf that what I advanced was the truth, and ſuch love and zeal I found for the honour and glory of God, that I cannot expreſs. One of the perſons ſaid before them all, with a bright and cheerful countenance, how glad ſhe was that I was come; ſhe ſaid ſhe had been longing and praying for me to come over, and I really thought, whilſt I was ſpeaking, there was ſomething for her as well as myſelf; the young man felt the power alſo, and declared he was refreſhed by the coming of Titus. And this made way for a meeting the next night at a private perſon's houſe, though it was the night they met at the chapel.

I ſlept there that night, and the next day I took an opportunity to go to one perſon that I heard ſecretly read your books, and had been comforted by them. It was a clergyman's widow, who was very glad to ſee me; ſhe told me ſhe thought when ſhe came to S—— how happy ſhe ſhould be, having the goſpel preached (as ſhe thought) both in church and chapel, but ſhe ſaid ſhe could not find any comfort at either place; but, ſays ſhe, I have lately got a book or

two

two of Mr. Huntington's, in reading of which my ſoul has been comforted and refreſhed. She had been reading of them in private, and told me ſhe was lately found out, and had been chid for it. She ſaid ſhe aſked the lady that took upon her to chide her, if ſhe ever had read any of his works? O! no; ſays ſhe, never: for he is a man of ſuch a bad ſpirit, and his writings of a dangerous tendency. However, by this it got vent, and ſhe ſoon had the miniſter of the church, and alſo the two deacons of the chapel, to admoniſh her for this raſh attempt; and they muſt look much ſharper than they do, if they keep her much longer under their veil.

Night came, and ſome how this poor woman, by the direction of Providence, found us out, though I did not tell her of our intended meeting. But I was very dark in my own ſoul, and very far from being as I was the night before; I felt myſelf a very poor creature, and not able, according to my feelings, to ſpeak any thing; but go I muſt, for that was ſettled. And this, I ſaw afterwards, was to let me know that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of me, a poor earthen veſſel: for when we gave over, I was very much ſurpriſed, indeed, to hear one ſay, You was ſent on purpoſe for me; another ſaid, You was ſent on purpoſe for me; and another, for him; and one declared that ſhe had been a profeſſor thirteen years, but never had ſuch a night as that. I might well be ſurpriſed: might

not

not I, think you? I really was; and, to tell you the truth (looking at myſelf), I had hard work to believe it, yet I dare not ſay it was not true.

The next day I ſet off home, and when I had got without ſide of the town, my good Lord was pleaſed to ſhine into my ſoul, and to give me, in ſome meaſure, the knowledge of the glory of himſelf, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. I underſtood by this that I had been doing the Lord's will, and aſtoniſhed I was to think of the goodneſs of our God, that, though there were two eloquent miniſters in the town, yet that he ſhould ſtoop and condeſcend to bleſs and comfort the hearts of his people by ſuch a weak and contemptible mean as myſelf. May the Lord be eternally praiſed. Amen.

This viſit, I think, has laid the foundation for ſome of them to ſeparate themſelves from thoſe that "glory in appearance, and not in heart;" and to aſſemble themſelves together at ſtated periods; but where it will end I know not. After I got home, finding my heart knit to them in love, and conſidering that ſome of them would have a good deal of difficulty to go through, I have ſent them a long letter.

I have not room to give you an account of the converſation that the young man and I had with the church miniſter, which I think was for two hours or more. Neither ſhould I have troubled you with ſo many particulars as I have, had it not been to diſcover the amazing means the Lord uſed

uſed to bring it about, his condeſcenſion when there, and his goodneſs in viſiting of me the greateſt part of the way home, and betimes for three or four days after. He fulfilled his word, he went before me, and alſo was my rereward; he alſo was a wall of fire round about us, and the glory in the midſt of us; and, as I ſaid before, ſo now ſay I again, may the Lord be eternally praiſed. Amen.

I hope ſending this ſo quick will not hinder you from writing to my other letters as you intended, neither to this ſo ſoon as you ſhall have opportunity. And may the Lord bleſs and proſper you in ſoul. Amen.

Pleaſe to give my love to your ſpouſe, and to our dearly beloved friend Mr. O———, and all that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity and truth. Our friends deſire their love to you, and eſpecially my wife. I hope I ſhall hear from you again the firſt convenient opportunity. I earneſtly beg of you to beg of God, that he will lead and guide me by a right way, for I find myſelf ſtrangely entangled at times, indeed; nay, overwhelmed ſometimes, that I do not know where I am.

I ſhall write no more at preſent, but ſubſcribe myſelf your loving and affectionate brother in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt.

A. R.

LETTER XVIII.

To Mr. A—— R——.

Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me bleſs his holy name.

My boaſting before Titus is found a truth. God hath confirmed the word of his ſervant, and performed the counſel of his meſſenger. Zion hath one to lead her among the ſons which ſhe hath brought forth; one is raiſed up to take her by the hand among the ſons that ſhe hath brought up. Thou art my brother, be thou the father of thouſands and of millions, and may thy ſeed poſſeſs the gates of their enemies. Children are the inheritance of the Lord; the fruit of Zion's womb are his reward; he ſhall bend Judah for himſelf, and fill his bow with Ephraim; and thoſe that handle the bow ſhall go to Tarſus, Pul, and Lud, to Tubal and Javan, and their bow ſhall not return empty: bleſſed is the man that hath his quiver full of them. Go on, the Lord is with thee, thou man

of

of valour, mighty in thy Saviour's might; and thou ſhalt deliver Iſrael. Stand like an iron pillar, or a brazen wall; hold no conference with fleſh and blood, nor with carnal reaſon and unbelief. Set your face like a flint, and go through ſtitch with it; diſcharge the whole counſel of heaven, and back it with ſolemn appeals to God and conſcience. Know no man after the fleſh; ſet off without the camp, and aſk who is on the Lord's ſide? and this will diſcover thoſe who are enſnared in holes, and thoſe who make lies their refuge, and bring ſuch to a concluſion who halt between two opinions. Make full proof of thy miniſtry, by enforcing and inſiſting upon the application and experience of it, for that is the power of it, and is the love of the truth, and truth in the love of it; and this will produce a twofold ſavour, a ſavour of death unto death in the ſcoffer and railer, and a ſavour of life unto life in the humble penitent. Set forth the balances of the ſanctuary, and God will weigh both the ſpirits and the actions of men before thee; the wooden and earthen veſſels will kick the beam, when thoſe of gold and of ſilver will drop with a weight of glory into thine heart, and thou wilt live and die with them. The reproach, ſcandal, hatred, and malice, that I have met with, did, in former years, diſcourage me not a little; but now it hath but little weight. Succeſs in the miniſtry, and acceſs to my God, makes the yoke eaſy and the burden light; knowing, in my own conſcience, that the light, power, and preſence

of Chriſt with me, hath been the procuring cauſe of it from firſt to laſt; and what is it all, when compared to the intolerable burden of unpardoned guilt and vindictive wrath? No more than a feather. Should the ſame ſucceſs attend thy labours, thou wilt fare no better; the power of God and the offence of the croſs are inſeparable; when the former fails, the latter ceaſes. A miniſter by whom Satan ſuſtains no loſs, is a miniſter againſt whom he will raiſe no forces; but if the Lord works with thee, Satan will work againſt thee. Go forth with your ten thouſand, and he will come againſt thee with twenty thouſand; however, ſend no embaſſy, nor deſire conditions of peace, for he is the enemy of Michael, and of all the works of heaven. Thou art informed, by an infallible pen, that the law worketh wrath; and ſure none under heaven have appeared ſo implacable and unmerciful to me as thoſe who are continually contending for that rule; neither a good conſcience, nor a healthy countenance; neither the teſtimony of truth, nor the approbation of heaven; neither the ſeals of your miniſtry, nor the viſible ſigns of the empire of grace, can ſtand acquitted before their envy. The going forth of the divine power of the goſpel takes them, by day and by night it paſſes over, and is a vexation only to underſtand the report; this ever will be the caſe of thoſe whoſe bed of carnal eaſe is too ſhort to ſtretch themſelves on, and their fig-leaved dreſs too narrow to wrap themſelves in. The

goſpel is a riddle to thoſe who turn aſide to vain jangling. The wrath of God revealed in the law is the ſpirit of bondage, and the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart is perfect liberty—Mount Zion never gendered the former, nor did Mount Sinai ever produce the latter. God miniſters not the Spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. Pray for them, and pity them; for the old vail is upon their hearts, and they know not what they do. Spend no breath, no time, in vindicating me or my character. I know my dear Maſter, and he knows his poor ſervant, and will diſcover, one day or other, who are his, and who not. He hath made me manifeſt in the conſciences of the worſt of my enemies, by making me the ſavour of death unto death to them. Contend thou for the truth that he enables thee to ſee, and for the power that thou haſt felt in thy own heart, and for the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience, and for the end of the life-giving commandment, which is charity out of a pure heart, a good conſcience, and of faith unfeigned.

If thou follow after and enforce theſe things, which are things that accompany ſalvation, thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed; for this is doing the work of an evangeliſt. There may be ten thouſand inſtructors, but there are not many fathers; for ſuch, and only ſuch, are honoured with the title of fathers, and with the honour of begetting poor ſinners to a life of faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and none but theſe are in the

bonds of the goſpel. Miniſters of the letter may kill, or adminiſter death, and that is all; for the ſpirit of life goes not with the letter, but with the powerful promiſe of life; nor is it communicated by a bond child, but by the heirs of promiſe. It goes from faith to faith; I believed, therefore have I ſpoken; we believe, and therefore ſpeak. None but believers have life in them, the unbeliever is condemned already, and he may communicate that ſentence, but he cannot communicate life, for he never had it. But will God ſtill chooſe the fooliſh, the weak, and the baſe things of the world, to confound the wiſe, the ſtrong, and the honourable? Am I to have another fellow-ſervant after mine own heart, one out of whom the Lord will ſhine, and by whom the Lord will ſpeak? Will he make thee a tabernacle for his Sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a ſtrong man to run a race? O! that thy line may go out into all the earth, and thy words to the world's end, ſo that nothing may be hid from the light thereof. Day unto day uttereth ſpeech—let the children of the day ſpeak to each other. Night unto night ſheweth knowledge—a blind guide that leads the children of the night, makes the children of light ſhine the brighter. As God changes thy frame, ſo change thou in thy miniſtry. If bound, deſcribe legal bondage and the workings of it; if free, enforce liberty; if haraſſed with inbred corruption, ſhew the plague of the human heart, and the promiſe that

God

God hath made to them that feel it; if in darkneſs, deſcribe it, and the neceſſity of divine illumination; if weak, treat of human frailty; if ſtrong, enforce the Spirit's might; if ſtirred up and fired with zeal, ſound an alarm in the holy mountain; if joyful, charm never ſo wiſely. In this way thy word and thy ſpirit, thy heart and tongue, will go all together; *a gift is as a precious ſtone in the eyes of him that hath it; whitherſoever it turneth, it proſpereth.* Of this be ſure, the more ſucceſs thou haſt in God's work, the more violent will thine oppoſition be. If Satan ſuffers any loſs by thee, he will lay about him with all his might. If God honours thee, thou wilt be loaded with all manner of reproach; and as thy fame ſpreads thy troubles will increaſe, in order to counterbalance popular applauſe, and to keep thy ſpirit humble. Viſions of the third heaven, and the buffetings of Satan, will appear a ſtrange contraſt, but very needful; for the paſſover lamb and the bitter herbs muſt be eaten together, or elſe pride would overſet us. The greateſt enemies thou wilt ever find in this world, are men of gifts, who are deſtitute of the grace of God; legal preachers under the curſe of the law, and at the ſame time appear with the word *goſpel* in their mouth; and thoſe profeſſors who are ſtiff in the form of godlineſs, but ſtrangers to the power thereof: none ſo far from the bond of the covenant, none ſo far from the bond of all perfection, as theſe: they love the world and the things of the world, and will pity and ſympathize with hypocrites;

but he that is begotten of God, and he that begets, they cannot love; I am a living witneſs of this truth. But let none of theſe things move thee to deſiſt from the good work to which thou art called and appointed; open thy mouth wherever an opportunity ſhall offer, and the more you ſcatter, the more you ſhall increaſe; and as you water, you ſhall be watered alſo yourſelf. It hath long ſince been revealed to me that thou art ordained to this good work, and in ſome future period this ſhall be revealed to thee. Believe in the Lord thy God, ſo ſhalt thou proſper; believe his ſervant, ſo ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed. And ſhould I hear of thy proſperity, and that thou quitteſt thyſelf like a man, I will not ſay that I will not come and viſit thee this ſummer, ſhould God direct my way to you. My love to all that love HIM. Ever thine in Chriſt.

Yours, &c.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XIX.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR,

Do you ſuppoſe that I have forgotten you? *This*, I am ſure, can never be the caſe, if it was only for what I can get from you. I received your laſt favour in due time, though I have been ſo long before I acknowledged it. Sometimes I am declining ſomewhere, I know not where. I get into a ſad labyrinth, hedged up in a wilderneſs, where I can hear nothing, ſee nothing, but mope about, and grope like the blind for the wall, and have no power to write, to think, nor ſo much as to pray; there is nothing diſmal in this world, or in the world to come, but what I fear will come upon me, and then conclude if I did belong to the Lord it could not, nor would not be ſo; then again ſome unexpected relief, ſuch as little indulgence in prayer, when I can pour out my complaints, and reflect on my baſeneſs and awful rebellion; I begin to think how abominably vile I have acted, and how merciful the Lord has been; and ought not I to bear all this,

this, and much more, from him, without murmuring and repining, and let his Sovereign Majeſty do with me as ſeemeth good in his ſight? I am ſenſible that I have no claim upon him; I have forfeited his favour, and that for evermore, if he was to deal with me according to his juſtice. I am tempted, at times, to nibble at his ſovereignty; but the ſcriptures preſently ſhut my mouth. What aſtoniſhes me as much as any thing, is the unexpected enlargement I find ſometimes in the pulpit, and that when I have been the whole day in fetters, and not a word opening in the Bible; this, at times, meekens and melts my heart much, but I am ſure to have it that night; for the devil has kept me awake the greateſt part of the night, and haraſſes me in a dreadful manner, and if I fall aſleep he terrifies me with dreams, ſo that I really have ſometimes been tempted to let him alone for fear of him; but the next time the Lord gives me power, I have at him as bad as ever.

I can ſee your laſt clear enough, and I think I can ſee your deſign in writing it; which was, to let me know that I am not to expect that the old man will either be killed or mended. I believe that he is incurable, and I think the devil dwells in him; and, I am ſure, I hate them both with a perfect hatred, yet I have their company day and night; but it is ſorely againſt my will. Your caſe and mine, Sir, differ widely—"perfect love," you ſay, "has caſt out the fear of death, and keeps it out."

This

This I believe with reſpect to you, and can ſee it clear enough agreeable to the word of God, but it is not ſo with me; if I had but this, I ſhould fear nothing. I long for another epiſtle; for, under God, theſe are the means that bring me along, if I am coming along at all.

God bleſs you, &c.

J. J.

LETTER XX.

To the Rev. Mr. J———.

It is true, my dear friend, I did think that I was out of ſight and out of mind; or, at leaſt, the ſame devil that told you that I ſhould write to you no more, bore the ſame lying teſtimony at Paddington. God knows how ſorely I long after you in the bowels of Chriſt, and how thankful I am for every viſitation of God to you. I have long indulged this confidence, that the Lord hath a great work for you to do, and he is fitting thee for it. The knowledge of ſin and the law, of ſelf and of Chriſt, of hypocrites and of ſaints,

ſaints, of profeſſion and poſſeſſion, is abſolutely neceſſary to every one that is a workman, who does the work of an evangeliſt, and who rightly divides the word of truth, and makes a difference between the clean and unclean, the vile and the precious. I know the Lord is with thee, thou art holpen with a little help; hope works againſt deſpair, and counterbalances it, and we are ſaved by hope. Faith has got a faſt hold of him; this is plain, by the violence uſed by ſin and Satan againſt it; neither of which can make faith relinquiſh her hold; ſhe will overcome the world by the Spirit's aſſiſtance, and by the help ſhe brings from the Saviour; who will ever honour faith, becauſe faith always honours him, and excludes all boaſting from the creature, by leading the ſinner to reſt alone in the finiſhed work of our great Deliverer. Againſt this reliance alone on Jeſus proud nature argues and brings forth her ſtrong reaſons; at this ſhe ſpurns, rebels, and oppoſes herſelf, till her ſtrength is exhauſted, and the ſoul is bewildered, confounded, and befooled, inſomuch that the ſinner becomes a myſtery and a riddle to himſelf, and knows nothing as he ought to know; and when this clay is taught to lay paſſive in the hand of the potter, it is moulded into another veſſel, as it ſeemeth good to the potter to make it.

I wonder not at thy unexpected enlargement in the pulpit; for when we enter upon this work ſelf-debaſed, we are ſure to be exalted; when many

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ſilent groans, tears, and petitions, have been poured out in ſecret, we are rewarded openly; when we appear ſelf-emptied, his fulneſs is ſufficient, and we find that our ſufficiency is of God; in our weakneſs his ſtrength is made perfect; and when we appear dumb men, in whoſe mouth are no reproofs, then it is—" ſon of man, when I want thee to ſpeak I " will open thy mouth;"—a door of utterance is given, the Spirit of our heavenly Father ſpeaketh in us, and we ourſelves are aſtoniſhed, both at the matter, the manner, the fluency, and the fortitude. When we have been thus indulged, and we leave off full of power and energy, then we expect to cut a greater figure the next time; and, in this confidence, we are minded to go unto them; and if we are furniſhed with a text, and ſome tolerable views into it, this heightens our zeal, braces and equips us, and at it we go, full of ſelf, ſelf-dependance, and ſelf-ſufficiency. In the firſt prayer we find that we are more mighty in ſelf than we are in word; and though the text and the heads be given out with ſome degree of boldneſs, yet when we come to explain them, that lock of hair wherein our great ſtrength lay is cut off, we ſhake ourſelves, but it is nothing but a ſham or a banter, and the Philiſtines themſelves can ſee it. Our heads of diſcourſe are half loſt, for Satan has ſtole two parts out of three of that which we committed to memory. Soon after we loſe ſight of the text, and then every thing

thing that preſents itſelf flies away from us; and in hunting after theſe views we loſe ourſelves, and then, like the hireling, we earneſtly look for the ſhadow, not to get the reward of our work, for that is only ſhame and confuſion of face; and this ſends us home as abaſhed and ſelf abaſed as we went out in the morning; and we are more fit for the work when the battle is over, than when we began the attack; for I often think that the ſecond diſcourſe is a preparation for the third, or an emptying us, in order to another ſupply.

I long much to ſee you. You ſee the hand of God againſt his and your enemies, and you know who maketh us to differ. God bleſs thee; write ſoon; ever thine.

W. H. S. S.

Paddington.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I AM juſt come home from Mr. M——, with whom I dined yeſterday, and heard your letter read, and from that I ventured to publiſh you laſt night at M———; but now having received yours, I am quite confirmed and ſatisfied. Great are the expectations in town and country of your coming, and glad they will be to be informed of it. I hope the country air will be of great ſervice to you after your late illneſs, to brace up your body, and that your miniſtry, under God, will brace and gird up the minds of many.

My ſoul rejoices to hear how you have been enabled to prevail with God on the behalf of that poor ſinner; how good the Lord is! O! how Satan deals with us poor mortals! firſt gets us to ſin againſt God, hardens our heart, and blinds our eyes, and we endeavour to hide our tranſgreſſions in our boſom, and yet hope in a God all mercy; but when God cuts the cable of that anchor, down we go, and then Satan knows it is his time to belabour us; and we rightly deſerve it for giving heed to the father of lies.

lies. O! how we have followed his lying vanities, and forſaken our own mercies! O! what long ſuffering has the Almighty ſhewn, towards me eſpecially, the vileſt of the vile. I have feared often that the devil would kill me, if I did not kill myſelf; but I have found him a liar more than once. The Lord would ſend that ſcripture often to my mind, and though it was but a conditional one, yet it greatly ſupported me; "*Whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his "ſins, ſhall find mercy.*" I know he has heard me; but yet I am a myſtery, I cannot underſtand myſelf. If I receive a little lift, I think ſoon after that I ſink lower than ever. I never had ſuch ſeaſons in my life as I have had of late, and that was through a few lines in your letter. I never had ſo much melting and ſhame on my knees before, ſo much enlargement, and ſuch a profuſe flow in the pulpit, as I had all day laſt ſabbath; I almoſt thought my fetters were gone, and ſo did the people; but I am now, I think, darker and more ſhut up than ever, and of courſe more rebellious and ſtubborn. O! when ſhall I be able to maſter unbelief, rebellion, and Satan! would to God I was delivered from them, and that I could but ſee their deſtruction; I would then rejoice more than all the conquerors in this world ever did. God Almighty bleſs you, and preſerve you long for our ſake, is the ſincere wiſh and prayer of your moſt obliged friend,

J. J.

LETTER XXII.

To the Rev. Mr. J——.

THE path of my ſon ſhines more and more; he goes from ſtrength to ſtrength; he makes ſtraight paths for his feet, nothing lame appears to be turned out of the way; *the Lord's way begins to be made known to him, which is his ſaving health among all nations.*

Satan's threatenings to kill my ſon, is a little like Goliath's defiance of *David*; he ſhouted victory upon the brink of ruin, and Satan threatens in the belly of hell; but the Captain of our ſalvation has deſtroyed him that had the power of death by death, and triumphed over him in it, and has led captivity captive; and by an infinite ſatisfaction redeemed us from the hand of the terrible, and by an omnipotent power has, and will, wound that infernal head over divers countries. O! King of kings, and Lord of lords! ride forth, and ride proſperouſly, becauſe of truth, meekneſs, and righteouſneſs, which are ſo much wanted in the earth.

No, no; thou doſt not ſink lower than before: but every time that the glorious viſitor withdraws

theſe viſitations which preſerve our ſpirits, and which are attended with enlargement, ſweetneſs, and glorious light; which, when withdrawn, make the ſtocks in our apprehenſion more galling, the wormwood and gall more bitter, and the dark regions more diſmal. Theſe glorious changes are not to ſink us lower, but to raiſe us higher—but the wonderful difference of the climate make our ſenſations the keener, *which makes the captive exile haſten that he may be looſed, and that he ſhould not die in the pit, and his bread fail.*

The laſt ſabbath, my ſon, was a good day; it was almoſt *one of the days of the Son of man.* Theſe earneſts, foretaſtes, and ſweet morſels, ſharpen the appetite, and make us pant for the living God, like the hart for the water brook. A few more of theſe changes, and then the door of hope will fly open, the *priſoner will go forth, and he that ſits in darkneſs will ſhew himſelf*; and then every budding hope and expectation, every longing deſire, every ſpiritual thought, faith, hope, heart, and affections, will all be admitted to enter into the holy of holies, and even to the right hand of God, where Chriſt ſitteth; thy heart and thy treaſure will be both together, and you may fetch them back again if you can. You have acknowledged me in part, and you will in future acknowledge me in this alſo, and even to the end; for thou wilt never get out of my ſight, out of my depth, nor out of my track, go where thou wilt.

It is theſe things, my ſon, that make a miniſter, and they make a miniſter a workman that needs not to be aſhamed; thou wilt preach the things that thou haſt ſeen and felt, and not be like the falſe prophets who *ſpeak a viſion out of their own hearts, when they have ſeen nothing.* Jer. xxiii. 16. Ezek. xiii. 3. Thou wilt ſhine in thy Maſter's rays, burn in his love, ſtand in his ſtrength, perſonate his majeſty, and ſpeak a viſion out of his mouth; thou wilt not depend on the barren prop of a treacherous memory for matter, but on the Fountain of life, and the ſpringing well within, will furniſh thee better than ten thouſand volumes of the ancient fathers. The words of the Lord are pure words, as gold purified ſeven times; and when theſe flow with power from the *bowl* to the golden pipe, every branch in the candleſtick will ſhare in the light and heat, which keeps the virgins with their loins girt and their lamps burning; bleſſed is ſuch an ambaſſador, and bleſſed is that hill of Zion that has ſuch a watchman upon its walls; for he cannot hold his peace, he muſt preach by day and pray by night.

Satan, rebellion, and unbelief, are already maſtered and deſtroyed. Satan, the prince of this world, is both caſt down and caſt out; and our old man, with all his members, is crucified with Chriſt; nor muſt my ſon expect to get rid of all the old inhabitants of the land, ſome muſt be left to prove Iſrael. When we are clothed upon with our houſe that is from above, then this ſaying ſhall be brought to paſs that is writ-

ten; *and there ſhall be no more the Canaanite in the houſe of the Lord of hoſts.* Zech. xiv. 21. Furthermore, theſe are left to keep us from confidence in the fleſh, and from truſting in our own hearts; to keep us looking to Jeſus; to exerciſe us and our grace as ſoldiers; to make us watch; to furniſh us with errands and petitions to the throne of grace; to make us loath ſelf, and deny it; to make us long to be unclothed; to remind us of our paſt folly, and to humble us under it; to teach us that this is not our reſt; to make us cleave cloſe to Chriſt, and to depend upon him for freſh ſupplies; to ſhew us the need of a Saviour, and of momentary ſupport from him; to ſhew the power of grace over corruption; to give Satan an opportunity of filling up his meaſure, by reſiſting the will of God, and haraſſing the objects of his choice. Moreover, the difference between the two covenants is wonderfully ſeen herein, and the different foundations, the *Rock* and the *ſand.* Adam could not ſtand on the footing of works, when there was no Canaanite in Eden, nor corruption in his heart; but we ſtand firm upon the baſes of grace, encompaſſed with a legion of foes without, and poſſeſſed by a million of corruptions within. And in this is wonderfully diſplayed the riches of God's grace; for it is here that his grace is ſeen to be ſufficient for us, and herein is his ſtrength made perfect in weakneſs. That Adam ſhould ſtand in jeopardy when in a ſtate of innocence, and we be made to ſtand and *moſt gladly to rejoice in*

our

our infirmities, is a wonderful myſtery; and it may truly be ſaid of Jacob and of Iſrael, *What hath God wrought?* Numb. xxiii. 23. Why he has wrought ſo, as *that there is no inchantment againſt Jacob, nor divination againſt Iſrael*, notwithſtanding all the accuſations, temptations, fiery darts, and terrors of Satan; *the devils are ſtill ſubject to us through his name*; and we ſhall, by and by, put our feet upon the necks of theſe lords that have formerly had dominion over us.

Be diligent, ſtruggle hard, continue inſtant in prayer; plead the atonement, the promiſes, the invitations, the covenant, and the man at God's right hand made ſtrong for himſelf; plead guilty, and petition for the balm and the hyſſop; give him no reſt until he eſtabliſh, and until he make thee a praiſe and a bleſſing in the earth. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thee. Amen.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XXIII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

As I called upon you when I was ſinking in the horrible pit, I thought it but meet and right, now the Lord hath proclaimed my enlargement, to inform you of it; and as I am perſuaded you love to hear of the works of the Lord, and of the power and glory of his kingdom, I am encouraged to write the following account.

I was born of diſſenting parents, who brought me up (as it is commonly called) in a religious way, therefore I kept cloſe to my meeting from my youth up. When I came to the age of eighteen, I began to be very deſirous of underſtanding the doctrines I had formerly heard preached when I was in the country: and being now an apprentice in London, I had an opportunity of hearing various preachers, and generally went to hear thoſe that were called ſound Calviniſts, believing ſuch to be the miniſters of Chriſt; but I was often confuſed in my judgment by ſome who were not clear, for I could ſee no harmony in their doctrines.

About

About three years ago, by the good providence of God, I was brought under you, where I ſoon got clear views of the doctrines of the goſpel: but I found your preaching to be very contrary to fleſh and blood; however, as it was agreeable to divine revelation, I knew it was right.

About this time it pleaſed God to impreſs my mind with a full perſuaſion that I muſt be born again, and that if I died in my preſent ſtate I could not be ſaved; this cauſed me to ſeek much to God in prayer, that he would bring about this good work. I was convinced of the vanity of my natural religion, and made ſenſible of my blindneſs and ignorance, and that all my knowledge of the doctrines of the goſpel, without the power, was vain. I wiſhed to be a weary and heavy laden ſinner; for then, I thought, there might be great hopes of my ſalvation: but vainly thought that I had not been wicked enough ever to be loaded with guilt and bondage as ſome are.

I underſtood, by your preaching, that I muſt paſs under the rod before I could be brought into the bond of the covenant; from hence I expected to have ſome great affliction of body, and likewiſe to ſee myſelf loſt, and then God would reveal his Son in me, and all would be well; and thus I attended your miniſtry for a long time, earneſtly begging the Lord to apply his word with power. And when you held forth encouragement to ſeeking ſouls, I

found myſelf very happy, believing that I was one; but, alas! I was ſtill a ſtranger to the rebellion of my nature, nor could I believe that I was ſuch an enemy to God as you declared we all were, until about the month of April laſt, when it pleaſed God to begin a deep work on my ſoul. At firſt I was ſeized with a diſmal gloomineſs of mind all day long, and at night with fearfulneſs and trembling, inſomuch that it was often three or four hours before I could get my eyes to ſleep after I went to bed. The Lord began to make manifeſt the thoughts of my heart, and to ſet my ſecret ſins in order before me.

I had not been long in this ſtate before a man, who had formerly made a profeſſion of religion for many years, came into the room where I was at work, and he was in madneſs and black deſpair. Seeing ſuch an awful ſight added not a little to my heavy affliction: the threatenings and curſes in the Bible began to wound me deeply, and my ſin to appear exceeding ſinful. Having Mr. Romaine's Life of Faith by me at that time, I frequently read it; one part of which in particular cut me to the quick, where he mentions many characters who have no faith, and amongſt the reſt he brings in "the formal profeſſor, with goſpel notions in his "head, but no grace in his heart;" and ſays it is a dangerous ſtate, and confirms it by this paſſage, *for if we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge*

ledge of the truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſins; from this I concluded I had been guilty of *the great tranſgreſſion.*

One Monday evening, about that time, you was ſpeaking of ſpiritual, and likewiſe of formal, prayer, and you ſaid a perſon might take a form of prayer and read it by one who was given up to black deſpair, but it would be of no uſe; for, ſaid you, *there is a ſin unto death*, and no prayer will do for that. Theſe words *(a ſin unto death)* ſtruck me with ſuch horror, that I went out of the chapel ſhaking like a leaf.

On the Thurſday morning following, before I was up, I really thought I was in hell; all was black deſpair; I kept crying out, Is there no hope? Is there no hope? Something within anſwered as faſt, No; no hope, no. How long I lay in that fit I cannot tell; but in the courſe of my trouble I had four or five more ſuch, but none ſo bad as the firſt. Indeed I believe that theſe were the ſnares of death and the pains of hell, and I then believed that I was reſerved in blackneſs of darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day; and Satan ſuggeſted, that if ever I went to hear you again, the ſentence of condemnation would be ſo ſealed home upon my conſcience, that I ſhould immediately go diſtracted. The next morning I called upon you, and you told me, " that I was in the ſtrong hand of God, and men- " tioned many paſſages of ſcripture deſcriptive of " my ſtate, and ſaid I ſhould go deeper yet, and

" that

" that the Lord would bring me out in his own " time," which gave me ſome encouragement for the preſent; but I ſoon thought that you was deceived in me, for my load of guilt and bondage grew heavier than ever, and Satan began to buffet and accuſe me in a cruel manner, and perſuaded me that I had told you many lies, and that I could expect no bleſſing under your miniſtry, inſomuch that I was aſhamed to go into your chapel; and when I was there, I was in ſuch terror, that I was forced to hold faſt by the ſeats, leſt I ſhould be driven out diſtracted. My body, alſo, ſometimes has been worked up into ſuch ſtrange feelings, as though it would burſt. I have ſometimes thought that I was dumb, and wiſhed the ſermon to be ended, that I might try whether I could ſpeak or not. At other times my neck has appeared to be ſo ſtiff that I could not turn my head, and often I felt as though the uſe of my limbs was taken away. Indeed I feared I was entirely given up to the devil, for I could receive nothing from your mouth but condemnation; I ſaw myſelf to be one of the vileſt wretches that ever crawled upon the earth, and, as I had ſat under the goſpel ſo long, I looked on myſelf fully ripe for ruin and deſtruction, and ſunk *deeper and deeper* in deſpair.

One ſabbath morning I took a walk; and while I was walking and pondering over the ſad ſtate I was in, never expecting to be any better, I thought I would not go to hear you any more, but would wander

wander about all the day, when theſe words came powerfully to my mind, *if any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*; what to do I knew not, for I expected if I went to hear that I ſhould only be made worſe. However I was forced to go; and in your ſermon you was ſpeaking of the power that God diſplays in holding all things in exiſtence, and of devils and damned ſouls being kept in their miſery, while his incenſed juſtice, flaſhing on them, ſtirred up the flames; I had ſuch a view of their ſtate that I was almoſt diſtracted; my throat was ſo hot through the terrors I felt, that I ſet off directly you ended your ſermon to get ſome ſmall beer to cool it, but expected ſoon to be where I ſhould not be allowed a drop of water. My friends ſtrove to comfort me; but I was deſperate, and would not hear them. However, in the evening, I came to hear you again; and, after wreſtling hard with God in prayer for his bleſſing, I heard you from theſe words in Romans, *the Spirit itſelf helpeth our infirmities*, &c. Here you ſpoke of the difference between one who was given up to the devil as Judas was, and one who was under convictions by the Spirit of God; and before the ſermon was ended I loſt all my load, and went away rejoicing in hope. O! what a change was this! But this laſted but a ſhort time, for on Monday evening you cut me down again; Tueſday evening, at Monkwell-ſtreet, I got a little comfort; but, on Wedneſday evening, down I went again, for, indeed, the words have

come

come with ſuch amazing power from your mouth, as to make my heart ſink like a ſtone. I got no more ſuch comfort again for five or ſix months, but thought I was given up to hardneſs of heart; during which time my ſleep was almoſt taken from me, ſo that I thought it pretty well if I could get one night's reſt out of three; but ſometimes I had not a minute's ſleep for three nights and days together, which made my head ſo bad, that I thought I ſhould have loſt my rationality; and being by trade a journeyman ſhoemaker, it was hard for me to keep my ſeat, and for many months I did not do a day's work in a week, and for a whole fortnight none at all; but my good and gracious God would not ſuffer me to ſtarve.

While I was in this ſtate, one evening you preached from theſe words, *We muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt.* O! what an evening was this to me! I thought the Lord had ſent you to preach this diſcourſe, that I might receive my ſentence firſt from your mouth; and then I expected that my ſoul would ſoon be ſeparated from my body, in order to receive the ſentence from a conſuming fire, or an angry judge, which is no leſs. You appeared to be the worſt enemy I had in this world, becauſe I thought that your miniſtry was made a ſavour of death unto death to me; and I thought that every one that looked at me would be a witneſs againſt me. All the following night I had no reſt, but expected to be cut off every moment; hell

ſeemed

ſeemed to be open to receive me, the terrors of my mind was ſo great, and the enmity of my heart was ſo ſtirred up, that *I was like a wild bull in a net, full of the fury and rebuke of God*, Iſaiah li. 20. And the anger of God was ſo reflected on me, that I thought I heard Satan ruſhing behind the wainſcot in order to ſeize my ſoul. I generally had four ſuch nights as this out of ſeven, inſomuch that I would have given a world, if I had had it, for one hour's peace, before I ſunk into endleſs miſery; I ſometimes tried to harden myſelf againſt it, but the more I ſtrove, the worſe I was; and, to add to my affliction, there was a great dog in a yard near to where I lodged, howling and jumping up in his chains all night long; this was having the law ſent home indeed; and it was well for me that my friends were people that feared God, for if I had lived with ſome folks I ſhould have been put into bedlam. My having ſo much terror brought my body ſo very low, that I felt continually as if I were dying; and I have got out of my bed five or ſix times in a night to make my eſcape from death, and have run into my brother's room (with whom I lodged), telling him and my ſiſter that I knew I was dying, till I wore out the patience of all who were about me; I have often ſtood by their bed-ſide in all the horrors of the damned, telling them theſe were the happieſt moments I ſhould ever know. After going on ſome time in this manner, they adviſed me to come and ſee you again. After much perſuaſion I

conſented;

conſented; but you, being very buſy, could not ſee me: I therefore thought God had impreſſed it on your mind that I was a reprobate, and ſo you would not ſee me; and, though I generally heard you preach four or five ſermons in a week, I was ſo ſwallowed up with deſpair that they were of no uſe to me. One day I heard you ſay, a man in black deſpair is a hell upon earth; indeed I thought you was right, for if ever there was a creature that carried hell about with him, I did; my diſtreſs cauſed ſuch a burning heat in my face, that I thought it was ſome of the fire and brimſtone already kindled within me: and ſo dreadful was my rebellion, that I told my friends I expected to make an awful end; and had ſuch conceptions of the dreadful blaſphemy there was in the bottomleſs pit, that made me cry to God, that when I got there he would not permit Satan to make me blaſpheme, but wiſhed to bear my puniſhment without murmuring. And as I had no hope of ever being ſaved, I began to pray God to give me health and ſtrength to get my bread; but could not pray in faith: for I knew, as I was ſhut up in unbelief, I ſhould run worſe into ſin than ever I did.

One night I had ſuch an awful view of the terrible majeſty of God, that I felt as though I were lifted up in the bed, my head ſeemed ſwelled as big as a large corn meaſure, and I expected to be cruſhed every moment like a moth; at times I have felt as though my head was faſtened down to the pillow.

low. O! what an awful diſtance there is betwixt a holy God and fallen ſinners before they are brought nigh by the precious blood of Chriſt! My friends adviſed me to come once more to ſee if I could have an opportunity of ſpeaking to you; but I objected, ſaying you could be of no uſe to me, for I was given up to deſpair; at this time I could not pray, and for many days dared not approach God even upon my knees; if at any time I liſped out a petition, it was when my head was ſmothered up in the bed-clothes, and then I expected, as ſoon as it was out of my mouth, that the ſword of juſtice would cut me down. After much perſuaſion I came to your houſe, but Mrs. Huntington told me I could not ſee you, nor indeed did I wiſh to ſee you; however I plucked up my courage, and aſked her, whether the reaſon you would not ſee me the laſt time I came, was that you had no hope of me? She ſeemed to be in a great agitation, and faintly anſwered, No: but I thought ſhe ſaid ſo leſt ſhe ſhould diſtreſs me. I aſked further, Whether ſhe ever knew one who had no hope, and who could not pray, ever be delivered? She replied, It was a ſad ſtate; but told me I muſt look to the Lord, for there was no help to be had any where elſe. And, indeed, I could only look, ſigh, and groan, I could not pray nor cry; my heart was ſo hard I could not ſhed a tear if it would have ſaved my ſoul. As I thought you had no hope of me, when I was at chapel I was forced to get where you could not ſee

me, fearing you would call out to me, and tell me I had no buſineſs there, for I was a reprobate. Soon after this I thought I was ſeized with death, and began to talk to my ſiſter about the ſtate of her ſoul, telling her to ſee that ſhe made her calling and election ſure, to examine herſelf whether ſhe was in the faith, &c. I told her I expected to be gone in a ſhort time; that I was a ſon of perdition, a veſſel of wrath fitted for deſtruction, and that I muſt go to my own place, whereunto I was appointed; I told her ſhe would remember me as long as ſhe lived, and no doubt it would give great diſtreſs to her, but wiſhed her to be reſigned to the will of God; ſaying, *He doth according to his own will in the armies of heaven, and amongſt the inhabitants of the earth; and none can ſtay his hand*, &c. &c. I took my leave of her, telling her ſhe would ſee me no more, but I would run to my brother's, who lived in the next ſtreet, thinking to die there. I began to talk to him after the ſame manner, expecting every minute to be my laſt; which made him cry mightily to God, in this time of trouble, for me. I had not been there long before I grew better. This being Wedneſday evening I went to chapel, but to no purpoſe, my thoughts were ſwallowed up with the fears of death and hell; for every time I went to chapel I heard nothing but my condemnation over and over again; and thinking it was great preſumption in me to dare to go, expecting to die while I was there, I reſolved many times never to

go again; and indeed I was quite weary of my life, and wiſhed I could end in annihilation.

One night I went into the city, but durſt not go into the meeting; I often uſed to walk round about your chapel a long time before I could venture to go in, and often thought I would not have gone, had it not been for hurting the minds of my friends. At length, having no hope of being ſaved, I began to contrive which would be the beſt way to ſave my life.—Satan's advice was to leave off hearing, and I ſhould ſoon get better and ſtronger, and, when I could earn money enough to maintain myſelf, then to leave all my profeſſing friends, and go into the country: ſo I ſtrove to put all thoughts of futurity far from me; and, as I could not beat off the hopes my friends had of me, by telling them I knew I was given up to a fearful looking for of judgment, I began to laugh and jeer at them, and would laugh and talk about any thing but the ſtate of my ſoul. Surely it is of the Lord's mercy I am not conſumed. I had not been long in this deſperate ſtate before a man that was ill in the houſe died: this rouſed my ſtubborn ſoul, the fears of death ſeized me afreſh, and the wrath of God ſeemed more hot than ever againſt me; Satan turned accuſer, and I was as it were hanging over the belly of hell, and yet I had ſomething that caught hold of the Godhead of my Saviour: and indeed this was all I had to hold me up; my load of guilt was ſo great, and my iniquities were infinite, that had I not believed in the

Godhead of Chriſt, I muſt have ſunk to all eternity.

Although at this time my heavenly Father chaſtened me ſore with the terrors of his righteous law, yet the bleſſed Spirit often helped my infirmities at a throne of grace, and at this time in ſuch a manner as he had not done for ſome months before; and now, all on a ſudden, hope began to ſpring up, and I had a ſtrong faith in the immutability of God, and in the promiſes of the goſpel; and, in a few weeks, I had light given me to ſee that it was God's work on my ſoul; and when you was deſcribing his work from theſe words, *Behold ye, and wonder; for I will work a work in your days, &c. among the heathen*; I could ſee, as you went on, the way that God had brought me; though at other times I got into the dark again, and feared I ſhould be loſt after all; and thus, up and down, I went on till the 14th of February laſt, which was nigh four months after I was raiſed to hope—a day much to be remembered. It was on the ſabbath-day morning, and a ſabbath it was to my ſoul. I awoke out of ſleep about ſix o'clock, and thinking of the dubious ſtate I was in, not ſeeing clearly my intereſt in Chriſt, I was led out in prayer to God, after the following manner. — " Oh! thou almighty and " eternal God, who didſt condeſcend to take on " thee my nature, in order to redeem loſt, periſh- " ing ſinners! I pray thee that thou wouldeſt be " pleaſed to make known thy ſalvation to my " ſoul;

" ſoul; that I may be ſatisfied with thy mercy;
" that the tongue of the dumb may ſing for joy;
" and that this may be a ſabbath of reſt to my
" ſoul, &c." I had not been at prayer long before theſe words came powerfully into my mind, *the ſet time to favour Zion is fully come.* I wiſt not that the viſion was ſo nigh; but I had ſuch longing deſires after Chriſt, which nothing but Chriſt's coming himſelf could ſatisfy, and I began to pray with ſuch fervour and faith, that I told the Lord I knew he would anſwer me; my heart began to melt, the tears ran down my face like rain, and I had ſuch a view of Chriſt crucified for me, that my heart felt as though it would burſt with grief: I kept crying out, What! didſt thou die for me? Didſt thou bleed for me? Oh! make me love thee! Make me honour thee! Never let me, never let me, ſin againſt thee again, &c. The ſight of my dying Saviour made me weep ſo loud, as to wake two people out of their ſleep who were in the next room. When I had been weeping over and bleſſing my dear Saviour about five minutes, I was filled with ſuch amazing love, joy, and peace, in believing, which made me break out into ſinging or ſhouting, as loud and as faſt as I could, in theſe words:

Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
I'll ſing thy praiſe to harps of gold,
Becauſe thou ſhed'ſt thy blood for me.

Theſe words I ſhouted over and over near twenty times; my ſoul was ſo filled with the glory of heaven, that my poor body felt as though it would be ſhattered to pieces. This was ſome *of the good old wine of the kingdom, which made me forget my poverty, and remember my miſery no more.* What an almighty power operated on my ſoul as ſoon as my Saviour came! I knew it was that God that made heaven and earth; and when I ſaw him, by faith, bleeding in my nature for me, his condeſcenſion and love ſeemed ſo great, that I could not bear the ſight; indeed it broke my heart: and ſoon after, when I began to rejoice, I had ſuch a bleſſed view of him in his beauty and glory, and of that land which is very far off, that I ſhall never forget.

When I was in my diſtreſs, like David I often ſaid all men are liars; but now it is, *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?* After the Lord had raiſed me to hope, I expected (as I had lain ſo long in bondage to the law, that) my deliverance would be conſpicuous, and I thought I could not be ſatisfied concerning my ſtate unleſs it was; and, I bleſs the Lord for it, ſo it is come to paſs, and I think Satan will not eaſily baffle me out of the reality of it.

I hope, Sir, you will excuſe my intruding ſo long upon your time; but I have ſuch a ſight of what the Lord has done for me, that I could not help mentioning ſome of the particulars to you.

I am

I am a ſingle man, in the 22d year of my age. I muſt conclude with begging an intereſt in your prayers, that, as I have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, I may ſo walk in him; whilſt I remain,

Your's affectionately,

A. W.

LETTER XXIV.

To Mr. A. W———.

BELOVED OF GOD,

Some on boards, and ſome on broken pieces of the ſhip, and ſo it came to paſs that all got ſafe to land; nor hath this voyage been attended either with harm or loſs. Good it is, my ſon, for a man to bear the yoke in his youth, as Jeremiah did, whoſe remembrance of the wormwood and gall hung long upon his memory, and humbled his ſoul within him. Thou haſt been pretty ſharply handled, and I am glad of it, for it has bruiſed and broken thy ſpirit, which muſt make it ſore and tender; and a

daily croſs, with a little additional furnace-work by the way, will keep it ſoft, humble, and contrite; and if armed with a filial fear, and this fear obſerved, cheriſhed, and attended to, theſe will be a tolerable fence againſt the wiles of Satan, and will make thee tremble at the thoughts of nibbling at thoſe laſcivious baits, with which he plies thoſe awful profeſſors whom God hath given up to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs. This fear, and a tender conſcience, always go together; and ſo ſure as we ſcale this fence, or break through this hedge, the ſerpent will bite, and hardneſs of heart is ſure to follow, and it is ten to one if ever ſuch a ſoul gets his armour ſo cloſe and compact upon him again while he is under the ſun. Thou haſt felt what an evil and bitter thing ſin is, and what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God—and thou haſt had a clear view of that juſt One in whom God can be propitious, and in whoſe face thou haſt ſeen the light of the knowledge of his glory.—Let that glorious and open viſion be ſtill in view, let thy mind be ſtaid there, and perfect peace will enſue; and while thou thus lookeſt through that glaſs, though but darkly, thou wilt be changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord; for we are predeſtinated to be conformed to that bleſſed image, and the tranſporting views of faith will effect it more and more, nor will the glory of heaven itſelf wholly eſcape thy ſight.

O! what

O! what condeſcenſion, what humiliation, is this in God, to behold the things that are done on earth! And will God, in very deed, dwell with men? Yes: though he be high, yet hath he reſpect to the lowly; for a ſinner created anew in Chriſt Jeſus is the maſterpiece of divine workmanſhip, and from ſuch the King of kings receives his greateſt revenue; *this people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe.* They ſhall celebrate the illuſtrious perfections of his nature, his counſels of old, which are faithfulneſs and truth, the wonderous works of his hands, the innumerable folds of his wiſdom, and the glorious majeſty of his kingdom.

I bleſs my God for thee, my ſon, and on thine account, becauſe the glorious work proſpers in the hand of Zion's King; he ſhares a portion with the great, and divides the ſpoil with the ſtrong; the travail of his ſoul, and the fruits of his labour, creep forth *from the lions den, and from the mountains of the leopards.* By the blood of the covenant the priſoners ſtill go forth from their cells, and thoſe that ſit in darkneſs ſhew themſelves, and ſhine under the ſpring of eternal day; and ere long the remains of the vail which now too often intervenes ſhall be done away, and we ſhall know as we are known; and all theſe ſad and dangerous allurements, with the whole of this groſs matter which is now in view, ſhall diſſolve and vaniſh, and we ſhall awake in his likeneſs, and be ſatisfied therewith; *for he that hath ſhewed us great and ſore troubles ſhall quicken us again, and bring us*

up again from the depths of the earth; he ſhall increaſe our greatneſs, and comfort us on every ſide. Then ſhall we ſee him as he is, and be filled with all his fulneſs.

But I muſt counſel thee a little, and tell thee what will befall thee, more or leſs, in the courſe of thy pilgrimage. Thou art now in the banqueting houſe, in perfect friendſhip, and in ſweet union with the beſt beloved, and his voice to us at ſuch times is, *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* This is the language of the heavenly wooer in the day of eſpouſals, and in the day of the gladneſs of his heart. But look up, and ſee; what is that which hangs over thy head? *His banner over me is love.* True; but a banner is a ſign of war, and the *Shulamite is a company of two armies*; time will tell thee what that means. The new wine, of which thou ſpeakeſt, is in general poured forth plentifully on the day of eſpouſals; but the time will come when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. Yea, the time will come, when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye ſhall not ſee it. Weaning days are terrible days to the little heirs of promiſe, and days of abſence and ſpiritual deſertion are no leſs diſmal to a wife of youth; but the God of Iſrael, the Saviour, is verily a God that hideth himſelf; and when he does ſo, who then can behold him? At theſe times his wonders in the land are obſcured, and his commandment is hid. The hills of

Judah flow neither with wine, nor with milk. Wiſdom refuſes to ſleep with us, and even to talk with us; we ſeek him, but he is not to be found; we call him, but he gives us no anſwer. Looking up, recoils with grief; and looking to months paſt, is attended with aggravation. We have been driven, yea, wooed and won from all earthly enjoyments, and wholly abſorbed in divine and heavenly realities; and now dead to the one, and bereft of the other. But faith muſt be tried. The adverſary ſalutes us with the old taunt, *where is now thy God?* The old man, which we thought to be crucified, dead, buryed, and for ever gone, riſes again in a worſe appearance than in Samuel's mantle; for he appears with ſeven heads and ten horns, and all his members more clearly and more diſtinctly ſeen than ever they were before, and if poſſible more deſperate, and all againſt the empire of grace, with Satán at the head of them—a true emblem of the Gog and Magog army encompaſſing the camp of the ſaints; and the worſt of all is, Jeſus is not to be found. But we muſt have an engagement in the wilderneſs, before we return in the power of the Spirit, in order that our ſonſhip may be confirmed in us, and that we may know, by bleſſed experience, that his grace is ſufficient for us. In theſe trying times every bait that can poſſibly gratify fleſh and blood will be hung upon Satan's hook, and all our former pleaſurable ſins will be preſented to view, and the natural enmity and rebellion of the heart not a little ſtirred up; which, to

a ſoul

a ſoul reconciled to God, appears a *ſtrange thing*. But this is the time for the believer to quit himſelf like a man; to be conſtant in prayer, though no anſwer be given; to be diligent in the means, though nothing appears to be gained by trading; to be much in private, though followed up by the worſt of company; ſtill to ſeek him, though it appears to be labour in vain; to read, although every thing runs againſt us; and to watch his hand, though we ſee not our ſigns, nor one token for good. When we have laboured through this fiery trial, faith appears more precious than gold, the way more clearly caſt up, and our feet to ſtand in a more *even place*. I now commit thee to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build thee up, and to give thee an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified, by faith that is in Chriſt Jeſus; and remain, in the beſt of bonds, your friend and ſervant for his ſake,

W. H. S.S.

Church-ſtreet, Paddington.

LETTER XXV.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

DEARLY BELOVED AND HONOURED FATHER IN CHRIST JESUS,

As ſuch I ſhall ever eſteem you; for through your inſtrumentality alone it is that the Lord has been pleaſed to beget me to a lively hope that I ſhall never periſh, but have everlaſting life, and be found to be a member of Chriſt's myſtical body when time ſhall be no more.

You have long been made manifeſt in my heart and conſcience as a ſervant of the Lord; and the doctrines that you preach as the only true doctrines of the goſpel, being the very ſame that the apoſtles and prophets taught in the days of old: laying Chriſt Jeſus, and him crucified, as the only foundation for poor ſinners to build all their hopes and expectations of complete ſalvation and everlaſting glory upon. I have no more doubt of the word of the Lord in your mouth being truth, than I have of my perſonal exiſtence; no more. Becauſe it hath come with power to my heart, and by it the Lord hath effected a moſt wonderful change.

I will

I will now endeavour, as God ſhall enable me, to give you ſome little account of myſelf; the way that I have come; and of the Lord's dealings with my ſoul.

Though the Lord has been pleaſed, in a meaſure, to make darkneſs light before me, and crooked things ſtraight; yet I am ſtill a myſtery and a wonder to myſelf. You have, times without number, pointed out my caſe and experience, and told me where I am, and that in ſuch a manner as I never could do it myſelf. There is ſcarce a thought that ever paſſed through my mind, neither is there a work ever done by me in ſecret, but what you have been enabled to open out, and to make manifeſt. I have many times ſtood aſtoniſhed, that you ſhould have ſuch knowledge of me, of my paſt life, and of the way that I have come: this for a good while puzzled me much; but now, bleſſed be God, I know that it is *he* (and not *you*) that ſearcheth the heart and tries the reins of the children of men; that it is he that ſets a man's ſins in order before him, and lets him know what are his thoughts; for, upon examining the matter, I found that you could know nothing of me, becauſe I never ſpoke to you in my life, neither did I ever open my caſe and ſtate to *any man living*. Therefore, ſays I, this muſt be the Lord's doings, becauſe he declares, "I the "Lord ſearch the heart and try the reins." And, conſequently, the excellency of the power muſt be alone of him, and not of his ſervant. But to proceed.

ceed.—I was born in a village called *Lazonby*, ſituated upon the banks of the river Eden, in the county of Cumberland, about fifteen miles from the city of *Carliſle*, and ſeven from the market-town of *Penrith*; there I went to ſchool, and continued until I was turned of twelve years of age, when I was put apprentice to a linen-draper, at *Penrith* (Siſſon and Son), for four years and an half; at the expiration of which time it pleaſed the Lord, in his kind providence, to bring me to London, and bleſſed be his name for it.

I would here ſtop, look back, and take a view of my paſt life, and aſk myſelf this queſtion—Is there any thing good in it? No, nothing at all: all evil, only evil, and that continually; it was one continued blot, one continued ſtate of rebellion and enmity againſt the Moſt High. I may truly ſay with David, *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me:* and again, *The wicked are eſtranged from the womb; they go aſtray as ſoon as they be born, ſpeaking lies.* I think, if ever a poor creature ſerved the devil faithfully, and with full purpoſe of heart, I was the man; for deſtruction and miſery were in all my ways, and the way of peace I never knew; in all manner of ſin and wickedneſs I exceeded moſt of my fellows. The Lord was pleaſed now and then to bring me to books; conſcience has oftentimes made terrible work within, but when he began to lay about him with violence, then I would get into the world, and amongſt

amongſt my old wicked companions again, in order to get him ſilenced. And further, I would now and then reſolve, when matters got very bad, that if the Lord would be pleaſed to forgive me that time, I never would do ſo any more; and in this way I have bound myſelf in ſuch a manner at times, yea often, as is too ſhocking to mention; and in vowing, reſolving, and ſtriving againſt ſin in my own ſtrength, I continued for four years, and particularly againſt one beſetting ſin, but all in vain: for, as the Lord liveth, I never abode by one reſolution, nor kept one vow that ever I made, but broke through them all. The devil and ſin were both ſtronger than I, and I ſhould have been a ſlave and a drudge to them unto this day, had not the Lord been pleaſed, with his right hand and ſtretched out arm, to get himſelf the victory.

I was brought up to the church of England, and, according to the doctrine that I heard there preached, I could have no hope of being ſaved, though I thought the fault lay in me and not in the doctrine, which was ſalvation by works; them that lived a holy, good, and righteous life, they ſhould be ſaved; but, on the contrary, them that lived an unholy, evil, and unrighteous life, they ſhould periſh: and this I thought was certainly right, and as it ſhould be. My only comfort was this:— "Well," ſays I, "I am certainly a ſinner, and a "great one; but there are ſome as bad, or worſe, "than I; and God is a merciful God, therefore I

"ſhall fare as well as they." But, alas! when it pleaſed God to bring me under your faithful and honeſt dealing, this refuge, like all the others that I had, were made manifeſt to be only refuges of lies, and they were all preſently and effectually ſwept away.

When I firſt came to London, I was at an uncle's of mine in James's-ſtreet, Covent-garden, for about a month. The firſt Sunday after I came, he took me to Orange-ſtreet Chapel, to hear the word preached: the next Sunday, another uncle took me to Providence Chapel to hear you; but my going was only to oblige my friends, for I had not the leaſt intention of hearing to profit, having received a particular charge, before I came to town, not to have any thing to do with the *Methodiſts:* though this little latitude was allowed me, viz. to go now and then, if aſked, rather than give offence to my relations, who are many of them in that profeſſion. I ſhall not tell you all that I thought when I firſt heard you preach; but nothing good, you may be ſure. I underſtood no more what you ſaid, than if you had preached in *Greek* or *Hebrew*, and could not help ſtanding aſtoniſhed at my ignorance; or, to ſay the truth, at what I thought to be your fooliſhneſs; and yet, if I looked round among the people, I never ſaw ſuch a congregation before; for, inſtead of looking about them, or falling aſleep, they appeared to be all eyes and ears, giving ſuch

particular

particular attention, and taking ſuch heed to the things that were ſpoken.

The third time I came to hear you I had a ticket, intending to come now and then; and, glory be to the Lord's rich grace! he ſoon applied his word with ſuch a power to my heart, that I could not ſtay away. If I went (as I often did) to hear any other preacher, my heart and ſoul would be with you; though abſent in body, yet preſent in ſpirit; the Lord clearly fulfilling this ſcripture in my experience, *As ſoon as they hear of me, they ſhall obey me: the ſtrangers ſhall ſubmit themſelves unto me.* And thus, by hearing of the word, he was pleaſed to quicken my dead ſoul to feel, and enlighten my blind eyes to ſee, the true ſtate I was in. He cauſed ſuch an earthquake to be experienced in my conſcience, and ſuch a reſurrection among my ſins, that they were all (from my very childhood) ſet in order before me; many old ſins, which I thought were dead and buried, and would no more appear againſt me, ſhewed themſelves, and conſcience bore witneſs that they were all mine. The law I found to be holy, and to admit of no failing; but myſelf unholy, and in a terrible ſtate. I uſed to call only *outward* acts ſins, but now I ſaw ſin in the deſires and thoughts of the heart; and all that look for ſalvation by the works of the law muſt bring a perfect and uninterrupted obedience, not in deed only, but in *thought*, *word*, and *deed*; becauſe the law allows of no failure: it puts

puts the ſoul under the curſe and ſentence of death for the leaſt ſin of omiſſion or commiſſion; therefore, by the deeds of this good law, it is evident that none can ever be juſtified. As I had broken every precept of the moral law in thought, word, or deed, ſo I believed that what the Lord has threatened tranſgreſſors with would unavoidably be executed upon me; and theſe two texts ſtood out againſt me, and were ſadly in my way, until it pleaſed the Lord to ſhew me that they were both fulfilled for me by Chriſt's death: *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law*; but I have broken every precept, therefore I am the man here ſpoken to, conſequently under the curſe of God. The other text was, *The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die:* well, I have ſinned, therefore I am the man. Theſe are the words of the immutable and unchangeable God, therefore there can be nothing but death eternal for me. Theſe things working in my heart, alarmed and terrified me greatly. I began to wiſh that I had been in my old dead ſtate, for then it was better with me than now. I believed that God could not ſave me, but that I muſt periſh according to his word. Theſe things cauſed ſlaviſh and ſervile fear to work. Death and judgment tormented me, and the ſin and guilt upon my conſcience I ſoon found to be a load and burden *too* heavy for me to bear. The Lord appeared to me in his law, as he did to Balaam, with his drawn ſword in his hand, as an angry judge, and a conſuming fire; and

ſo he would at this day, was the dear Redeemer taken out of ſight, for he has revealed and made manifeſt no way in which he can be juſt, and yet the juſtifier of the ungodly, but through his dear Son. At this time it was that the Lord was pleaſed, by his Spirit, to teach me to pray. I was obliged to throw away my daily prayers of, *Our Father, which art in heaven*, &c. and, with the poor publican in the temple, to cry, *God be merciful to me a ſinner!* and, with the jailor, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* and, with Peter, *Lord, ſave; or I periſh!* My prayers now were ſuch as theſe, which came from a miſerable heart, and I never knew what it was to pray before; but now I know that it is one thing to ſay prayers, and it is another thing to pray: the one is only the motion of the lips, the other ſprings from a feeling ſenſe of want in the heart.

My old ways of ſin were now effectually hedged up with thorns, ſo that I could not find my former paths; deſtruction appeared on every ſide, and no way of eſcape for ſome time; but at laſt it pleaſed the Lord, in this *valley of Achor, to open unto me a door of hope.* When the Lord had effectually convinced me that I had nothing, and that I could do nothing in anywiſe to merit his favour, or contribute towards my own ſalvation, either in whole or in part, and that I was fearfully and totally fallen; that every faculty of my ſoul was out of order, and that my heart was deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked; that I could not recover myſelf,

ſelf, by any power of my own, from the reigning dominion of ſin, the curſe of the law, the wrath revealed therein, and the tyranny of the devil; then he was pleaſed to ſet before me his dearly beloved Son, as the only refuge from all theſe things, and as the ſinner's all-ſufficient Saviour.

I remember a time when you inſiſted upon it that Chriſt ſaved none but ſenſible ſinners, and produced this text, in order to confirm it, which was ſpoken by the Lord himſelf; *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.* I never heard ſuch news in this world before, neither could I believe it at the time I heard it. Surely, ſays I, he muſt be miſtaken; but ſhould he not, God knows I am a ſinner bad enough, and ſad enough, and therefore who can tell (if it be true) but he may ſave me. When I got home I ſet to work, like the noble Bereans of old, to examine the word, to ſee whether theſe things were ſo or not; when, lo! and behold it was juſt as you had repreſented it. Now a hope ſprung up of better times, and from that time the Bible and I came together, and bleſſed be God for ſuch a meeting, it being now my ſtudy, meditation, and ſoul's delight. And oh! what comfort did ſuch texts as theſe bring to my poor ſoul! They poured in ſo faſt, that before one had well delivered its joyful meſſage there was another; like Job's meſſengers, one upon the back of another.—*They that are whole have no need of the phyſician, but they that are ſick.*—*Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleaſure*

to give *you the kingdom.—For by* grace *are ye ſaved, through faith, and that not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God.—Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.—Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I* will give *you reſt.*—Such texts as theſe were running in my mind from morning till night, yea, from week's end to week's end; and, examining the word to ſee who and what ſort of ſinners had been ſaved, to my aſtoniſhment I found Mary Magdalen, Manaſſeh, Paul, &c. and this cauſed my hope and expectation to increaſe exceedingly. In proceſs of time the Lord was pleaſed, now a little, and then a little, to enlighten me into the doctrines of the goſpel as preached by you, and I had not a ſingle doubt but what you ſaid was true. He ſhewed me how that, in his dearly beloved Son, he could ſave all them that believe in him, and ſtill be true to his law and threatening, though the worſt of ſinners, and that he was juſt the Saviour I wanted, ſuited in all points; and he convinced me, that out of him I muſt periſh and be damned, there being no other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt and can be ſaved, but the name of Jeſus Chriſt; and that by faith in his blood, and righteouſneſs alone, it is that we are juſtified freely from all things, and no otherwiſe. Imputed righteouſneſs was the firſt doctrine of the goſpel that the Lord was pleaſed to reveal and apply with power to my heart.

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He ſhewed me how that his dear Son *was made ſin for us* (by imputation, having all the ſins of the elect placed to his account) *who knew no ſin*; and this was done that, by the imputation of his righteouſneſs (conſiſting both of his active and paſſive obedience) *we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* And in him God the Father is well pleaſed with his people, but then it is only and entirely on account of his righteouſneſs, and for the ſake of it, and not for any thing in them; for, was he to be extreme to mark iniquity in the very beſt of their works, there could be no ſtanding in judgment with him: therefore take away the imputed righteouſneſs of the dear Redeemer, and every one muſt ſtand to his own account, and anſwer for all his ſins; the conſequence of which muſt be, everlaſting deſtruction and endleſs woe.

Soon, after this precious Jeſus was ſet before me in all his beauty and glory, as an able, as an all-ſufficient Saviour, and as the only hiding-place from the ſtorm, and covert from the tempeſt, and I had no doubt of his being ſo; yet this would not do for me, I muſt know whether I had any part or lot in him or no. I had not a ſingle doubt but all that believed in him as their Saviour, and put their truſt in him as ſuch, would certainly be finally and eternally ſaved; yet I found myſelf ſhut up in unbelief. He cannot belong to me. I could never believe that ever he veiled the glory of his divine nature in a tabernacle of fleſh and blood, and ſo became Ema-

nuel, God with us, to ſave ſuch a monſtrous ſinner as me: and my old maſter confirmed me in it as much as he could; he repreſented it as impoſſible, and the very height of preſumption to indulge ſuch a thought. I found my want of faith, and I found alſo that the Lord had promiſed to give it, to work it in the hearts of his people by the operation of his Spirit; therefore my prayer to him was, to fulfil his promiſe; to give me faith; to work a firm perſuaſion in my mind that Jeſus Chriſt was mine, and that I had an intereſt in him; that all that he did and ſuffered was to work out and bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs to juſtify *me*. This for a long time I ſought after, and, bleſſed be God, not in vain; for, about three years ago, I did find a comfortable perſuaſion that Chriſt was mine, that he was my Surety, that he had paid all my debts, and that his preeious blood was ſhed to waſh away my ſins. This faith came to me by hearing the word preached; and upon thus believing and receiving him into my heart, I did experience unutterable reſt and peace, and ſuch a manifeſtation of pardoning love, as cauſed me to rejoice with that joy that is unſpeakable and full of glory; and with Zion of old could ſay, that when the Lord was thus pleaſed to turn my captivity, I was like them that dream. And from that time the Lord appeared to me as a loving, kind, and tender father in Jeſus Chriſt, and completely reconciled and well pleaſed with me in him. Jeſus Chriſt came into my heart and affections as the

chieſeſt

chiefeſt among ten thouſand; yea, the altogether lovely; and I had no doubt of being one of his people.

Theſe precious viſitations laſted with me for ſome months, during which time I had a very heaven upon earth; joy and gladneſs was found in my heart, thankſgiving and the voice of melody. I came from the houſe of God oftentimes with ſcarce a thought out of heaven, rejoicing in Jeſus Chriſt as the God of my ſalvation. Inſtead of the law curſing and condemning me for diſobedience when I read it, as it uſed to do, there was Chriſt at the end of it for righteouſneſs to me. Inſtead of conſcience curſing and condemning, there was a ſweet peace, the blood of Jeſus ſpeaking better things than that of Abel. Inſtead of the devil accuſing and condemning me for ſin, he was ſilenced, for my guilt was gone. Inſtead of ſlaviſh and ſervile fear of death working in my heart, perfect love kept that out. Inſtead of God the Father appearing an angry judge and a conſuming fire in his law, as he uſed to do, now nothing but love in the altogether lovely Jeſus: and this experience is what I am ſure will make the ſtubborn and flinty heart give way. For when, on the one hand, I looked at myſelf, at what I had been, and ſaw myſelf to be the moſt unworthy, and the very laſt that ever could have looked for, or expected ſalvation; and, on the other hand, the great goodneſs and love of Jeſus in dying for ſuch a wretch, and ſhedding

abroad his redeeming love in ſuch an heart as mine; this cauſed me to abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes, and cry out, Grace! Grace! and to ſay, To thy name, O Lord, be all the glory and praiſe.

I never had ſuch living as this before; but, alas! theſe things left me again, and the devil was more violent than ever: he was ſure that it was all a deluſion; that he would have me after all; that I was his child, and ſhould never be ſaved, but muſt periſh at laſt. He got me to look within at myſelf, and ſeeing mine own corruption, the many evil thoughts that paſſed through my mind, the unholy deſires and filthy luſts that were moving about within; a ſight of theſe things cauſed unbelief to work, and that brought in ſlaviſh fear, and a long train of doubts, which was followed by tormenting thoughts; and now the devil had got my peace deſturbed, for I drew many grievous concluſions that I could not ſurely be one of the Lord's elect, and oftentimes was ready to give all up for loſt, and that I never ſhould be able either to hold on or hold out, that I ſhould one day periſh in my own corruptions; yet now and then the Lord would be pleaſed to ſend me ſuch a heavenly diſcourſe, and ſilence all my doubts and fears in ſuch a manner with a ſenſe of his love, that I really believed him to be my reconciled Father ſtill, and Jeſus Chriſt to be my Saviour. Then again unbelief, doubts, and fears, would make ſuch head againſt me, that I would

would call all former experience into queſtion. In this manner I lived for a long time a life of as complete chequer-work as ever any one did, determining of my ſtate according to my frames and feelings, as if the Lord changed as often as they. But now I am perſuaded that he loved me from everlaſting in his dearly beloved Son, otherwiſe he never would have ſhed abroad his love in my heart in time: and, as he has thus been pleaſed to give me a taſte of it, ſo I believe that this his loving kindneſs ſhall never be taken away from me, neither ſhall his faithfulneſs and truth in the promiſe be ever permitted to fail. As he was pleaſed to chooſe his people freely, without any thing in them to merit his favour, ſo he will ſave them in Chriſt Jeſus freely, with an everlaſting ſalvation; and that he will give them all, not only grace here, but glory hereafter. That they ſhall never periſh, not one of them, neither ſhall any pluck them out of his hands. That they ſhall perſevere in the Lord's ſtrength, and not one ever totally and finally fall away. That Jeſus Chriſt being their head and huſband, and they the purchaſe of his blood, his portion, and his hire, he will never loſe one, but will raiſe them all up at the laſt day, ſo that not a hoof ſhall be left behind. And, furthermore, they being all ſecured by the bond of an everlaſting covenant, and the everlaſting love of Father, Son, and Spirit, the threefold cord which cannot be broken, they muſt of conſequence be ſaved, and brought ſafe home to glory; otherwiſe

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this cord would be broken, and the covenant agreement between the ever bleſſed Trinity would be null and void. All that Chriſt died for muſt be ſaved, and none elſe can be, becauſe there is ſalvation in no other. Though the Lord is pleaſed to will a thouſand changes in us, yet he is the ſame; the unchangeable Jehovah; the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; he reſts in his love to his people, and here it is that my poor ſoul finds, and ever deſires to find, reſt.

I have lately had ſuch a revival of the work of grace upon my ſoul, that ſermon after ſermon has come with ſuch a comforting and eſtabliſhing power, as to ſilence all my doubts and fears, the ever bleſſed Spirit bearing witneſs to my heart and conſcience that my record is on high. He hath alſo condeſcended to ſhine upon my path in ſuch a manner as to enable me clearly to ſee that it was he, and he alone, that hath been with me from my mother's womb; that he has directed all my ſteps, and that he hath fixed the bounds of my habitation: and I may truly ſay, to the honour of his ever bleſſed name, that it was he that preſerved me in Chriſt Jeſus through all my ſin and wickedneſs unto a future calling. Sparing and long-ſuffering mercy hath followed me all my days, and though the time has been that I never expected to be ſaved, yet now I know, and am ſure, that Jeſus Chriſt doth receive ſinners, and eateth with them ſtill. And this I ever will inſiſt upon, as long as I live in the world, that

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of all ſinners I am the very chief, and the very laſt that ever could have expected ſalvation; and that it is by the free, ſovereign, unmerited, unlooked for, undeſerved, and unexpected grace of God, that I am what I am; and that by the ſame grace it is that I have been enabled to continue unto this very day; and the ſame almighty power that began the work at firſt, and that turned my heart from the love of ſin to the love of God, hath kept me hitherto; and I am fully perſuaded that he will keep me, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, ſtill on in the way, until at laſt I receive the end of my faith, even the everlaſting ſalvation of my ſoul, when faith ſhall be turned into ſight, and hope into full enjoyment.

Old things are paſſed away with me, and behold all things are become new, for the very works, ways, and purſuits, that I delighted in, practiſed, and followed, I do now flee from, abhor, and deteſt. Jeſus Chriſt is all in all in my heart, and I can appeal to him, as the ſelf-exiſtent Jehovah, and the omniſcient God, with Peter of old, and ſay, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee*, and that above every other object. And again, I am ſure I can come up to John's ſtandard, *We know that we are paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we loved the brethren*; for I do, in my heart, ſincerely love all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity and in truth, and do eſteem them the only excellent of the earth. Other lords have had dominion

minion over me, and reigned and ruled in me, and would have reigned until this day had I been left to myſelf; but now I deſire no other king but Jeſus to reign and rule in my heart, and to make mention of his righteouſneſs, and of his only. I do think that there is no heart ſo peſtered with unbelief as mine; I daily have abundant reaſon to ſay, with the diſciples of old, *Lord, increaſe my faith.* The promiſe is, Grace ſhall reign, ſin ſhall not have dominion; and, to the honour of the Lord's bleſſed name, I can ſay this has hitherto been fulfilled in me; for though ſin hath reigned and exceedingly abounded in me, yet free grace hath much more abounded. I find the old man and the new principle working in me, and warring a continual warfare; but the promiſe is, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger; and I believe it ever ſhall be, according to the word of the Lord.

My reaſons for writing theſe are principally two: the one is that of the apoſtle's, *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.* The other is this—I have long had a deſire to become one amongſt you externally, though internally I have been in union with you for years, but being a very timorous perſon, I have deferred letting my deſire be made known until now; and being afraid that, through the deceitfulneſs of my unbelieving heart, and the corruption of my nature, I ſhould one day fall, I thought I had better fall alone, than bring any ſcandal upon the people of

God.

God. But having had many comfortable viſits lately, and many tokens for good, my deſire is increaſed, ſo that I cannot help making it known, as I would wiſh to wait upon Chriſt in all the means of his appointment, with full purpoſe of heart, neglecting none, expecting to find his promiſed preſence in them, and to receive the promiſed bleſſings by them. I know that all means in themſelves are dry, barren, and empty things, except the Lord is pleaſed to communicate grace to his people by them, and to bleſs them to our edification and comfort, working every ſaving grace in us, and applying every truth eſſential to ſalvation with power to our hearts through his appointed means: and, as he has been pleaſed to circumciſe my heart to love him, his people, and his way, and to cloſe in with Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, as my Saviour; ſo it is the deſire of my ſoul to live to his glory and his praiſe, to keep preſſing forward, reſting in no preſent attainment, but purſuing the good old way, in company with that part of his army, over which he has made you under captain and leader, towards that great and glorious recompenſe of reward, eternal reſt and glory, which he has promiſed to give to all his choſen people.

I would deſire to bleſs God for ever, for bringing me under your miniſtry, for opening my blind eyes to ſee how I had been led on by blind watchmen, and for enlightening me into, and bringing me in any meaſure to the knowledge of the truth as

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it is in Jeſus, and for opening my heart ſo as to receive the truth in the love of it; and, above all, for not ſuffering me to ſtumble at the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, as it is upon this reſts the efficacy of every doctrine of the goſpel: deſtroy this, and make him no more than a creature, or any thing leſs than the ſelf-exiſtent, omniſcient, omnipreſent, and omnipotent Jehovah, and the one ſupreme God, with the Father and the Spirit, and then I am ſure there can be no ſalvation, *all* muſt periſh and be loſt; and I will inſiſt upon this as long as I live in this world, that was he not in my heart and affections, as very and truly a divine and ſelf-exiſtent perſon, and poſſeſſed of every attribute and perfection of deity, no one could preach any goſpel, no one could publiſh any good news, no one could proclaim any glad tidings, or bring any joyful meſſage to my ſoul. For, ſuppoſe him a man, as he truly was, and to be perfectly holy, even as holy as the law; and ſuppoſe him to keep it in all points, ſo as never, in thought, word, or deed, to deviate therefrom, yet what is that to me? Nothing at all. A man's righteouſneſs may profit himſelf, but then there is nothing for me, his poor neighbour; he has nothing to boaſt of, he has done that which was commanded him to do, and no more; as our dear Saviour beautifully ſets it forth in Luke xvii, by the maſter and the ſervant, and then applies it to his diſciples, ſaying, *So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all theſe things which are commanded you, ſay, We*

are

are unprofitable ſervants; we have done that which was our duty to do. Woe then to that perſon whoſe faith and hope of everlaſting life, and bleſſedneſs in heaven, are not built upon Immanuel, God with us. As man, he obeyed and ſuffered; as God, he merited, and as God-man, two perfect natures in the unity of the one perſon of Chriſt, he wrought out and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, which is the one, only, and alone righteouſneſs that can juſtify a ſinner from all things, and preſent him faultleſs before the throne in the day of judgment; he was made ſin for us who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him: but deſtroy this union of the two natures in the perſon of Chriſt, and then none can appear righteous; no, not one. O! that you may ever continue to defend this ſure foundation of the Chriſtian religion, and inſiſt upon the need and neceſſity of being firmly fixed and eſtabliſhed in the faith of it, in order to our being ſaved. The Lord was pleaſed to cauſe you to dwell much upon it ſome time back, and, bleſſed be his precious name, I received great benefit and eſtabliſhment from it; take away this, and you take away all, there is nothing left worth having, all muſt die in their ſins; *For, if ye believe not that I am* (ſays the Saviour), *ye ſhall die in your ſins*; and then the conſequence muſt be certain deſtruction, becauſe the unrighteous ſhall not enter the kingdom of God, and by the law there is none righteous, no, not one. I have, through rich

grace, been enabled to receive Jeſus Chriſt into my heart as a divine perſon, as an object of divine worſhip, and, to all intents and purpoſes, as God over all, and for ever bleſſed; and as I have received him, ſo it is the deſire of my ſoul to walk in him, for nothing ſhort of a divine perſon can ſave me, being a ſinner. If the devil can but entangle and keep a poor ſinner ſhort of this, he is ſure of his prey; and if rich, free, ſovereign grace prevent not, ſuch muſt fall into the pit of deſtruction. I hope you will pardon this long and imperfect epiſtle, placing all that is amiſs to my account; and if any thing conſiſtent with the truth, to the Lord's name be all the glory and praiſe.

That you may long be preſerved amongſt us, and ſtill continue to ſhine brighter and brighter in the Lord's light—That you may ever ſtand faſt in his counſel, and ſhun not to declare the whole of it as far as revealed, faithfully, fully, and freely, and without reſerve—That you may ever continue to ſtand as an iron pillar and a brazen wall in the defence of the goſpel—That you may yet be inſtrumental in turning many ſinners from the error of their ways to the wiſdom of the juſt, even to Chriſt Jeſus; has been, is now, and ever ſhall be, the ſincere and fervent prayer of

Your truly affectionate, though unworthy,

Son in the faith of Chriſt Jeſus,

G. C.

P. S. I don't know that I ſhould have muſtered up courage ſufficient to ſend this yet, had it not been for the maſterly expoſition or explanation of, *I am the way, the truth, and the life*, laſt Sunday evening. And, bleſſed be the Lord for evermore, I could follow you ſtep by ſtep, and came away from his preſence rejoicing in my intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, calling all the ſermon my own. And for this, as well as every bleſſing beſtowed upon ungrateful and unworthy me, to the Lord's name be all the glory, and all the praiſe; for, as it was with Iſrael of old touching the earthly Canaan, ſo it is with the Lord's ſpiritual Iſrael touching the heavenly country, the land which is very far off; *They* (natural Iſrael) *got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, neither did their own arm ſave them; but thy right hand and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto them.* And ſo it is with ſpiritual Iſrael: they can do nothing to obtain heaven, they have forfeited all right and title to every mercy by ſin; therefore it is the Lord alone that does the work, that brings them in by an act of free, ſovereign grace, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, who is the only door of entrance, and the way to the kingdom. And bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt, through whom alone it is to be obtained. I have no more to ſay at preſent, than I ſhould eſteem it as a particular favour if you would remember me at a throne of grace, and that the

Lord may ever be with you in your going out and coming in, ſtill giving teſtimony to the word of his grace by you, ſhall be the prayer of,

G. C.

LETTER XXVI.

To Mr. G—— C——.

My dearly beloved ſon in Chriſt Jeſus, mercy and truth be with thee.

THINE epiſtle came ſafe to hand, and I ſaid in my heart, Who hath begotten me this child? ſeeing I am hated, and a captive driven to and fro, and have loſt ſome ſpurious children, that the devil had palmed upon me. Who hath begotten me this? This, where had he been? Surely thou art one born out of due time; before I travailed in birth thou art come forth. Who hath heard ſuch a thing? Before our Zion began to labour and lament her late miſcarriage, another is found upon her knee; and I hope not a ſpurious one, not a baſe born ſon,

not

not a baſtard that eſcapes both the ſoul-humbling chaſtiſements, and the experimental inſtructions, given by our heavenly Father's *rod*. Thou appeareſt to be one that hath been whipped out of Satan's army by the King of kings and Lord of lords; thy back will proclaim thy diſcharge from that rebellious hoſt. Welcome art thou to the Lord's ſtandard; welcome to the banner of his love; welcome to the King's pardon; welcome to the divine bounty; and welcome to his eternal favour, and to all the gifts received for the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell with thee.

But I muſt interrogate thee. How haſt thou broken forth? This breach be upon thee, and God grant it never may be healed; for it is a breach in Satan's armour, and not in Zion's bounds. Thou art a branch in the noble Vine, heaven hath planted thee wholly a right ſeed, ſuch truſt have I to Godward; not that I am able to think any thing right of myſelf, but my ſufficiency is of God, who by his grace has made me what I am. Surely thou canſt never turn into the degenerate plant of a ſtrange vine to the heavenly huſbandman! Strangers to the good Shepherd *ſhall beget ſtrange children*; and unſanctified labourers "ſhall plant their ſoil with "ſtrange ſlips, and in the day ſhall they make their "plant to grow; but the harveſt ſhall be a heap in "the day of grief, and of deſperate ſorrow." Iſaiah xvii. 11. But I am perſuaded better things of thee, my ſon, and things that accompany ſalvation, though

I thus write. The contents of my ſon's epiſtle are good news from a far country; good news in the power of them, in the experience of them, in the ſalvation of them, and in the happy enjoyment of all the bleſſings in them. The Spirit of God is a ſpringing well, and the words of wiſdom are a flowing brook; and that *moiſture* that accompanies the root of the matter in the heart will likewiſe attend a reaſon of the hope from the mouth.

Thou hadſt no call to inform me what inſtrument God uſed in framing thy ſoul for his temple; the whole pattern was ſhewed firſt to me in the holy mount, and thine is nothing but an abridgment of it. The features, the family-likeneſs throughout thy myſtical pedigree, parentage, and education, are conſpicuous enough. If I had heard thee giving an exhortation when locked up in a cloſet out of my ſight, and even in the Eaſt Indies, I ſhould have known both thy voice, and the voice of thy progenitor, *for thy ſpeech betrayeth thee.* Thou art the Coalheaver's own child, begotten to a lively hope by the Father of all mercies in my bonds: a true copy, a living epiſtle, known and read of all men; and made manifeſt to be the epiſtle of Chriſt miniſtered by me; written not with ink, but by the Spirit of God; not on tables of ſtone, but on the fleſhly tables of the heart. When the Almighty firſt found me in Egyptian darkneſs, *I ſpake a language that he underſtood not*, Pſal. lxxxi. 5: but he ſet me down at his foot, and taught me out of his law;

law; and when he put a new treasure into my heart, he convinced me that I wanted a new tongue to bring that treasure forth; and when the cloven tongue of fire came, I spake a new language, and it was this language which so much puzzled thee at thy first hearing me, and so it has thousands more as well as you; but certain I am that it is *the language of Canaan*—the language of the better covenant, which was spoken by Melchisedec and by Abraham in that country, and by all the prophets afterwards, and by Christ and his apostles, and is peculiar to the promised land, and to the Israel of God, and to none else; for though other people may have learnt a smatch of it, yet (by them) it is always adulterated with the dialect of *Ashdod:* a mingled seed will speak an impure language, mixing it with the native brogue of their own country. And I was (and so was another person in company with me) much surprised at reading your epistle, and were not a little struck with astonishment at the pureness of the langtage, the clearness and cleanness of the style, and especially at the weight of the emphases, the determination of the points, and the eloquent punctuation of the accents, knowing that it is a language hard to learn, and the pronunciation of it difficult to obtain. But is there any thing too hard for the Lord? No, there is not; *for then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon my name, and serve me with one consent;* and what divine veracity hath promised, omnipotence

hath performed, and thou art a living witneſs of this truth. We may call it the holy tongue, and ſure I am that the ſame will be ſpoken in heaven; for, although it be ſaid, *if there be tongues, tongues ſhall ceaſe*; that is, the jargon and confuſion of tongues ſhall ceaſe at the deſtruction of Babel and Babel-builders, yet the pure language, the holy tongue, *and the words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*, ſhall never ceaſe; this language ſhall be ſpoken in Paradiſe, or elſe how ſhall we ſing hallelujahs and ſalvation to God and the Lamb for ever and ever? Or how ſhall we awake in the great day? And how ſhall our tongue awake which is *our glory* (Pſal. lvii. 7, 8), and of which we glory above all the creatures that God hath made in this world. When we receive the end of our faith we ſhall admire the end of our converſation alſo; and, with Paul in the third heavens, not only hear things which are not poſſible for a man to utter (2 Cor. xii. 4), but be able to utter them; for it will be both poſſible and lawful to utter them when we get into that country; for although their purity greatly exceeds ours, yet ours is the only dialect of that mother tongue.

He that begetteth a wiſe child ſhall have joy of him, and a wiſe ſon maketh a glad father, and I hope I ſhall have joy of thee. But there are ſuch things as falſe conceptions and falſe brethren, and ſure I am that the father of a fool hath no joy; for a fool is a grief to his father, and bitterneſs to her that bare him. But neither a faithful ambaſſador,

nor the incorruptible ſeed of divine truth, nor Zion's prolific womb, can ever be the origin or fountain of ſuch monſtrous productions; witneſs *Judas*, who ſprung up under the miniſtry of the everlaſting Father himſelf, and who got upon the knees of goſpel Zion, even among her firſt offspring, and had *part of the inheritance among the brethren*, and part of the double honour due to her moſt renowned ſons. He was an apoſtle and purſe-bearer to the King of kings; he had gifts of prayer, preaching, working miracles, and caſting out devils, but no grace: *he took part of this miniſtry with us*, ſaith Peter, but from this he by tranſgreſſion fell, as all will whoſe *hearts are not eſtabliſhed with grace. For ſtrong men ſhall utterly fall*; but he that hath life and a gift ſhall have more abundance; but he that hath not life, but a gift, it ſhall be taken away from him, even that which he hath. If the Prince [of Peace] give a gift to a [bond] ſervant, it ſhall be his to the year of jubilee, or as long as the fleſhly joy of his natural affections laſts; but when he gets under the legal laſhes of law and conſcience, curſing him for his hypocriſy, it ſhall then return to the Prince, as the talent of *Judas* did to Chriſt, and from Chriſt to *Matthias*; but if the Prince of Peace give a gift to one of his ſons, it ſhall be his ſons for them, for them to enjoy, and it ſhall be their inheritance for evermore, for ſuch *ſhall have more abundance* (Ezek. xlvii. 16, 17); more abundant life, more grace, more ſtrength, more light, and

the abundance of peace, ſo long as the moon endures.

I thanked God, with all my heart, that another brand is plucked from the fire; one more olive-berry left upon the uppermoſt bough; one more cluſter with a bleſſing in it; one more ear of corn in the valley of Raphaim, as the firſt-fruits of God's creatures, even firſt-fruits unto God and the Lamb. Bleſs God thou art among the children that God hath given to our Zion ſince we loſt the others (I mean the mixt multitude that fell a luſting, Numb. xi. 4); theſe ſeem to be whiſpering in our ears, the place is too ſtrait for us, make room for us that we may dwell; and my anſwer is, Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord, why ſtandeſt thou without? the oxen and the fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come ye to the marriage. Wiſdom cries, and Underſtanding puts forth her voice; ſhe hath furniſhed her table, and bid her gueſts, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled: and may the Lord of lords ſatisfy thy ſoul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and that thou mayeſt be as a watered garden, and as ſprings of water whoſe waters fail not, is the hearty prayer and earneſt deſire of,

Dear Son,

Thine affectionate father in the faith
and love of the goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XXVII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

My dear friend, where ſhall I find you? and where am I to look for you? I have been now a whole month or more ſeeking you, and my thoughts roving from ſhore to ſhore in purſuit of you; often ſaying, O! that I had the wings of a dove, I would find him out wherever he is, even if he is gone over the Atlantic ocean! I do believe I muſt ſoon go out in ſearch of you; not leſt peradventure you have been caſt upon ſome mountain, or into ſome valley, for I am perſuaded the everlaſting Arm will never let you drop down, nor will the good Shepherd ever let you ſlip out of his hand; but what I fear is, leſt you ſhould get into the fiery chariot before I ſee you. The Lord knows how much I have longed for you, my heart has been with you wherever you have been; and ſeldom or ever do I go on my knees but you come in my mind: I know not why; for I cannot think you want my poor prayers, though I ſo much need yours. I am at preſent poor enough, and ſeem contented

contented in my poverty; this I do not like; I dread carnal eaſe, which I often find is ready to creep in. Since I ſaw you laſt I have at times been more comfortable in my ſoul than ever I have been in my life. The ſcriptures ſeem to open to me with more eaſe than uſual, not only thoſe you hinted at, but others beſides; and my ſpirit is more ſweet, leſs wrath and bitterneſs in delivering my diſcourſes; I cannot fetch that on my ſoul again if I try at it, nor can I bring it into my diſcourſes if I was to attempt it. But this is only growing in knowledge; I am afraid of it at times, it does not pleaſe nor ſatisfy me; I contend with the Lord about the way, and am ſtill for having my own, and ſometimes chooſe ſtrangling rather than life, becauſe I cannot get it. This is the way I go on. If there is a little enlargement, and an appearance of coming out, then I fear I have not been long enough nor deep enough in; and when the dark day comes again, then I conclude that I have now been ſo long in, that I never ſhall come out to ſee light. What would I give if I could continue in the ſame frame as I delivered a few diſcourſes in ſoon after I ſaw you laſt; the ſavour of them ſeems to abide ſtill, but have not been able ſince to enter ſo largely into the field. No, no, my barrenneſs has again returned, and I cannot ſee that I am yet ſucceſsful; the inhabitants of the world have not yet fallen, nor have I wrought any deliverance on the earth. I do not know that I am good for any thing, except it is to murder, and that

I do

I do not like at all; I wiſh to communicate life to dead ſinners, this I would like. There is now a perſon at T———, on the borders of Kent, who, I am told, uſed to rave moſt deſperately againſt God's ſovereignty, and having heard much about me, came to hear me, whom God ſtruck with an arrow. He went home and got to bed, but has never been out of it to this day; he is in black deſpair, and his fleſh waſted from his bones; he cannot endure to be alone one moment, and talks of nothing but the ſermon he heard, and of ſtrange things going on at Lewes. There is a talk of more forces being raiſed to root out all the errors from this place; but I know what the ſword of all thoſe can do. What I want is to ſee the dead raiſed, and made to ſtand on their feet.

God Almighty bleſs you.

J. J.

LETTER XXVIII.

To the Rev. J. J———.

REV. SIR,

I AM now in my old hut, but not in a peaceable dwelling, nor in a quiet reſting-place; for it begins to hail, coming down on the foreſt, and the city (at preſent) is low, in a low place; and bleſſed are they that ſow beſide all waters, that ſend forth thither the feet of the ox and the aſs.

A kind and preſſing invitation hath cauſed me to ſtray from my Father's houſe, in order to ſcatter a little of the good ſeed of the kingdom in a ſoil where I had not been before; and in my abſence the enemy hath ſowed tares among the wheat, and is gone his way. I liſtened to the good report and popular applauſe that was given to me, by my kind ſolicitors, of a preacher whom I had never known; and being much put to it for a ſupply in my abſence, I readily exchanged with an incarnate devil, in the counterfeited rays of an angel of light, and ſo left my charge with one of the lewd hirelings, *whoſe fathers I would have diſdained to have ſet with the dogs of my flock.* He is one of the children of baſe men, he is viler

than

than the earth; I have brayed after him as after a thief, for he hath attempted to exclude them all from Chriſt, that they might affect him. To ſome he hath been a very lovely ſong, to others a builder up without a foundation, and the itching ears of others have been ſcratched; another, who, like Doeg, hath been long detained as a priſoner before the Lord; or, like Peter, his ſoul has been in chains between two ſoldiers, I mean the fleſh and the devil, was ſet at liberty by a wonderful definition of the two ſtone figures at the front of Bethlehem Hoſpital; which definition was applied to *Jonah* and *Hezekiah*—the former, the preacher ſaid was raving mad; and the latter, melancholy mad. But this is no wonder, the ſcribes called the Maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, and this gentleman ſays the ſame of his houſehold; but the preacher muſt go this ſtrange way through Jericho, in order to bring the aforeſaid gentleman into what he calls liberty, though to this day he is bound, and among the tombs, and ſeeking the living among the dead. Thoſe that have longed for prophecies upon ſmooth things and upon deceits, have been greatly bleſſed; the painted ſepulchres have all been touched over twice; the whited walls have had the bruſh upon them, and the tower of Babel hath been raiſed two ſtories; the chambers of imagery have been cleaned and freſh painted, but none of the high places have been taken away, the people ſtill ſacrifice upon them. Some who were never ſo low as the pots, have been like the wings of a dove covered

with

with ſilver, and their feathers with yellow gold. Others are in the higheſt ſeats, who, ſo far from being delivered, like the Hebrew women, that they were never ſo much as upon the ſtools. However, I am determined to make no leagues with theſe Gibeonites; nor will I treat with ſuch ambaſſadors; their clouted ſhoes, mouldy bread, and old leather bottles, are none of the things which bring glory to God in the higheſt, nor peace upon earth, much leſs good will toward men. Such wretches pretend to come to us becauſe of the name of the Lord our God, but they bring none of thoſe things with them that accompany ſalvation. I have ſhewed my determination to make no leagues with theſe hewers of wood and drawers of water; and in this matter I am brought into the ſad predicament of *Nehemiah*. Some praiſe the good deeds of this Sanballat, and repeat them to me, who are in alliance with him; but I am for no confederacy, nor do I dare to walk in the way of them that are confederate. This I have reſolved in my mind, and I have no doubt but the God of Iſrael will be with me in this determination; for I know that by this man the devil is come down among us, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time; and I know that Satan hates me with perfect hatred, for my dear Maſter's ſake. The old ſerpent ſeems to be very fiery, and ſome of his crooked generation begin to hiſs not a little; but I have not broke through the hedge, therefore I do not think that he or they can bite me. The ſun at noon day

doth

doth not appear more conſpicuous to me, than the ſpirit of the devil communicated by this man; and as God hath diſcovered this to me, and brought me to be a man of ſtrife and contention, I ſhall be emboldened as I go on.

I ſhall be a hind let looſe. Many who have long fawned in feigned humility, begin to grin like dogs, and go round about the city; and ſome who have, in the general, been dumb, begin to open now. I know God hath ſet me as a tower and a fortreſs, to try and know their ways, and I am ſure that they will have neither dew nor rain but according to my word, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſpoken by me. But at this time I had need be an iron pillar and a brazen wall; for I am ſure that they will fight againſt me with a high hand and ſtretched out arm, and in great wrath; for they are zealouſly affected, but not well. But nothing but their cruel treatment to me will ever drive or wean my affections from them. When once the ſounding of my bowels are ſtopped, he will order me to take the ſword, and teach me the uſe of the bow. Farewell; be of good cheer, and pray for him who hath ſo often and ſo long prayed for thee. God bleſs thee.

W. HUNTINGTON.

Church-ſtreet, Paddington.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER IN THE FAITH OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR,

MAY the peace of God rule and reign in your heart ſo long as you are in your earthly tabernacle, and enable you to ſpeak to others as an inſtrument in the Lord's hand, as you have done to me. O! bleſs his holy name for bringing me under your miniſtry! Not but he could have bleſſed me equally the ſame one hundred and ſeventy miles off, had it been his good pleaſure; but, Sir, you muſt have the honour of ſpeaking his word to me as his mouth, and praiſed be his holy name for it.

To give you a particular account of the Lord's dealings with me is more than I can do, for I am what I always was, that is, a poor hand at writing; but, for about a year and three quarters, I was in dreadful bondage, and I thought that, inſtead of the Lord's bleſſing me, he was going to deſtroy me; and you, whom I formerly took to be my friend, became my enemy, but it was for telling me the truth. O! the enmity and rebellion that worked

in my wicked heart! none can tell but them that feel it; and all againſt ſo good and gracious a God, whoſe thoughts are as far above my thoughts as the heavens are above the earth; bleſs his precious name, for his name is an ointment poured forth.

It was in the month of April laſt the Lord, by his Spirit, was pleaſed to viſit me in ſo wonderful a manner, that I think I never ſhall forget it, at leaſt I hope I ſhall not. I was about my work, and ſuddenly I felt ſuch an inward change, that I never ſhall be able to deſcribe. I ſaid, What is it? What can it be? I went upon my knees to pray, but prayer was turned into rejoicing and thankſgiving; for the bleſſed Spirit operated ſo powerfully upon my ſoul, that he made me call God my Father, which I felt a reluctance to do, and withſtood it as long as I could; being conſcious of my guilt, like the poor publican, durſt not look up; but theſe words came with ſuch power to my ſoul, *It is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners*; which words broke my heart These lines in Mr. Hart's Hymns followed,

Sinners are high in his eſteem,
And ſinners highly value him.

Never can there be a more cordial meeting with the neareſt friends in the fleſh, than there was betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and me a poor ſinner; my joys were ſo very great, that I cried out, It is enough! It is

enough! And had it continued ſo, I could no more have done any buſineſs; but he was pleaſed to withdraw, and the ſenſible loſs of the preſence of my Lord was almoſt death to my ſoul; no one then was company for me, but poor Mary Magdalene in her deſerted ſtate, *they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*; which were the very feelings of my ſoul; at which time I begged him to do it over again, which he did, time after time, from Thurſday till Sunday.

I was not at the chapel on Sunday morning, which I was not ſorry for, for I could not have contained myſelf, my heart was ſo broken; not with terror, but with grief that I ſhould crucify the Lord of glory. In the evening I went to hear you, but I had loſt my peace, and I do not remember your text, but I thought the whole diſcourſe went againſt me; I thought that the new wine had been put into an old bottle, and that the bottle would burſt, and the wine be ſpilled, and that I had not got the righteouſneſs of Chriſt upon me, which drove me almoſt to deſperation. In this condition I came home, and continued begging the Lord to come again; and on the next day, which was Monday, bleſs him, he did come. I then was grieved that it had not been done under your miniſtry. I went to chapel, begging that he would be pleaſed to ſpeak to me by you. The hymn that was given out was compoſed from, *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* I had loſt my Comforter, and ſaid to myſelf,

this

this is very ſuitable, but it is not for me; there I ſat fretting and mourning for my Lord to come. You took your text out of John; *And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* In opening it you ſpoke much upon the Trinity, which was a grief to me, for I wanted comfort; but when you began to explain the operation of the Spirit upon the ſoul, had I told you all that I had experienced, you could not have laid it down more plain than you did. You told me it was not me, but the Spirit in me witneſſing my adoption, and that made me cry, Abba Father! You treated of the Spirit's being an earneſt of the heavenly glory, and made a compariſon—that a perſon engaging a ſervant for twenty guineas a year, and giving one as an earneſt to bind the bargain, but at the year's end the other nineteen was to be received; ſo you told me from the pulpit that it was the caſe with me. I cried out, It is enough! and went home rejoicing, and told them in the houſe what God had done for my ſoul.

In a day or two after, a perſon called on me and aſked me how I was for clothing; it rather ſtruck me, but I replied, *Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believes*; they told me there was a myſtery in that, and I muſt go down to the bottom of the garden to get at it. I replied, *The effect of righteouſneſs is peace*, and I have got it. But this gave me no ſmall ſhake, and made me to beg hard of the Lord to perfect the work he had

begun on my ſoul, as it was all his own; and, bleſs him, he makes us pray for things which he deſigns to give; for in every ſermon you preached afterwards you brought forth the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and made it appear plain that I had got it, and that I was ſafe in it.

I ſhall tire you with reading my ſcribble, but muſt go a little further. In a few days after, when upon my knees begging of God to guide me and keep me humble at his feet, and telling him that I was not fit to be truſted by myſelf alone, theſe words flowed into my mind, *I will inſtruct thee, and lead thee in the way everlaſting*; which then was, and has been many times ſince, a great ſupport to me in times of trouble, and when under the hidings of the Lord's countenance.

Sir, I live among many who have a form of godlineſs, but I fear they are deſtitute of the power; nay, I believe in my heart that ſome of them hate it and them that ſpeak of it. Sometimes I have found gratitude and thankfulneſs flow out to the Lord for chooſing ſuch an one as me out from among them, who am ſo vile and ignorant, and while he hath left ſo many behind that are ſo wiſe and prudent; but they read the Bible to us, and put their own conſtructions on it, and ſpeak againſt the doctrine that you preach, though I know it is the truth; this puzzles and frets me ſo that I can ſcarce bear to ſit to hear it; but this I do know, that the Lord opened this door to me, and has bleſſed me in it, ſo that I

am afraid of doing any thing without ſeeing his hand going before me.

I have deſired often to ſpeak to you, but have been afraid to come. When I firſt began to write this, I was very happy in my ſoul, which comfort came under a diſcourſe which you had preached. Then I thought I would tell you what the Lord had done for me under your miniſtry, but a fear of pride and preſumption ſeized me, ſo that I gave over, and locked the ſcraps up; but finding the Lord precious to me ſoon after, I could not be ſatisfied without letting you know it. I thought I would ſend a few lines, but none of that which I had written before; but theſe words came to my mind, *What I have written, I have written*; ſo then I began to join more to the old piece, and have blundered on thus far, but I fear in ſuch a manner that you will not be able to read it; but it is the truth, and I hope you will pardon the liberty I have taken, and may the Lord bleſs you and yours. So prays

Your humble ſervant and ſincere follower,

L. A.

LETTER XXX.

To L——— A———.

MY SISTER AND DAUGHTER IN CHRIST JESUS,

THINE epiſtle came ſafe to hand—a love letter written under the influence of divine love, and is the bleſſed effects of a love-viſit, and the comfortable and ſure tokens of the divine Wooer and everlaſting Lover of poor periſhing ſinners. Thou art in covenant with God, within the bonds of it, in eternal union with him. Upon the ſervant, upon the handmaid, he hath poured out his Spirit. Say, Amen, and put thy ſeal to this—that he is true; and I ſay God ſhall confirm it, that the Coalheaver hath one more ſeal to his commiſſion, one more fruit to his labour, one more jewel to his future crown of joy and rejoicing, and God ſhall add to me another daughter. Labour and travail in ſoul and body I do; and not a few children appear in the world as the bleſſed effects of my labour in this miſerable age of empty profeſſion, abounding error, and ſuper-abounding iniquity. I have, by the good hand of my God upon me, met thee in the covenant Head,

in

in the unity of faith; and by the ties of love I am one with thee in the chief Corner Stone: and, if I never ſee thee in the fleſh, I ſhall meet thee with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. Every member of the old man will annoy thee; many ſnares, traps, and nets, will be ſet and ſpread for thee by Satan. Beware of theſe—beware of men—but, above all, beware of the miniſters of Satan, and of preſumptuous, arrogant, laſcivious, and wanton profeſſors, who are the filth of Zion, the chaff in the floor, the ſpots in our feaſts, the hypocrites in the family, the allies of Satan, and the fuel of hell.—From all theſe may the Lord of all lords deliver thee—Amen, and amen, ſays

Thy willing ſervant in Chriſt Jeſus,

W. H. S. S.

Church-ſtreet, Paddington.

LETTER XXXI.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your laſt favour, and kindly thank you for it. I beg you would put yourſelf to no inconveniency on my account, though I much long to ſee you, in hope of receiving a ſecond benefit, yet I know the Lord's time is the beſt. It is the greateſt ſatisfaction to me to hear from you, as I know not of any other friend and helper in the world beſides; and truly glad am I to hear that you overcome and tread down their ſtrength. Could I as clearly ſee, and be as fully perſuaded, that the Lord's hand will be ſeen towards me, as I am that it works for you, and will to the end, I ſhould then be very happy; but unbelief makes me ſtagger, and doubting the deſired end brings me at times nearly to the point of giving all up, and to run away ſomewhere, I know not where. But ſtill here I am, moving on ſo ſlowly that I cannot ſee that I go at all; yet I can ſee, by your writings, that I know more and more, and that I learn ſomething daily. But ſurely it is light given to one whoſe way is hid, and whom the

Lord

Lord hedges in. I have ſeen a deal of the Lord's goodneſs, much long-ſuffering he has exerciſed towards me, and I know he has heard my prayer in many things: he heard me and helped me when I was brought low, and none but himſelf could: he ſhewed me my awful ſtate by nature and by practice, and the myſtery of iniquity that was in my heart, together with my daring and bold preſumption on him without any warrant or leave from him, at the ſight of which I thought there was no mercy for me; but he was pleaſed to give hope, and hope ſupported me, and has to this day; and I believe, too, that he has put his truth in my heart and in my mouth, and you would hardly believe with what eaſe, light, and liberty, I can of late deliver it; but, after all, barren I am, barren are my thoughts, barren is my heart, unfruitful and unſucceſsful; yet there is a ſecret ſomething that tells me it will not be ſo always; but I cannot believe it, becauſe I can ſee no proſpect of it, nor the leaſt appearance of it; looking for the word to prevail among the people, but no ſign of it; the inhabitants of the world do not fall, nor are they likely to it, as I can ſee; and indeed how can I expect it, whilſt I am ſo barren myſelf. I have been more peſtered of late, with vain and evil thoughts, than I can well tell you. I have cried to the Lord againſt them, and he is pleaſed to remove them for a ſeaſon, but they return again. I know Satan tries to entangle me, but he has not been able to ſucceed yet, and I hope he never

never will. There is such a deal of iniquity in my heart, and such fretfulness and rebellion at the sight of it, that makes me fear that the Lord must lay forer troubles on me yet. I am afraid that the worst is yet to come; this I dread, and wish to know it too. And indeed I can hardly believe the Lord will let me go free with so light a punishment; for I can see very clear, that it was but little in comparison with my deserts. The Lord bless you, and teach you, that I may be taught; for I know that it is from your mouth I am to receive it. I believe the Lord's kind providence directed me at first to look there, nor have I looked in vain; for every step I have moved, and do move, is either by a word from your mouth or from your writings: and may God bless you, and reward you for it, is the prayer of

J. J.

LETTER XXXII.

To the Rev. J. J———.

The next ſcrap is ſafely arrived, and it is very perceptible to me that we gain ground; the outer man gets out of favour, and the old man gets out of office; he is not now the chief ſpeaker, faith and hope are almoſt as loud, and as diſtinctly heard, as he is; he now and then puts in a word in this epiſtle, which I do not ſo much wonder at, knowing that every fool will be meddling; eſpecially when ſovereign Grace is going to put an end to all ſtriſe in the court of conſcience. Thou knoweſt, my ſon, that thou art always welcome to me, until the cruſe of oil fails, and the barrel of meal waſtes; which will not be the caſe, till God ſend rain upon the earth, until the cloud of witneſſes diſtil ſuch ſhowers of grace, as ſhall fill the earth with the knowledge and glory of God, as the waters cover the ſea—till then the cruſe and barrel will ſpring in ſome poor ſinner's heart or other. We are both in one *hand*, my ſon; the ſame power that leads me on, holds you up; the ſenſible, ſelf-deſpairing, ſeeking ſinner, has got as many promiſes as

as the ſtanding ſaint. As to running away, that is the old ſtory over again: there is no ſuch thing as running away from God, there is no going from his Spirit, there is no fleeing from his preſence; if we go into heaven, he is there; and if we make our bed in hell, he is there alſo. It is not he that runs the faſteſt that wins the prize—the race is not to the ſwift; he that moves ſlow often treads ſure, becauſe he pondereth the path of his feet, and is the leſs liable to ſtumble in his walk: he that believes ſhall not make haſte. The captive exile is not to go out with haſte, nor go forth by flight; the chief Shepherd will go before him, and the glory of the Lord will be his rereward; he ſhall reflect upon the glory of the Lord in his happy deliverance, and ſee the leadings of his providence, and the light of his countenance directing his ways. The way of every coming ſinner is hid, for he is led in a way that he knoweth not, and in paths that he hath not known; and if his way is hedged up with thorns, theſe thorns are intended to prick his conſcience, that he may not purſue the old paths of the deſtroyer. The long-ſuffering of God toward us, when reflected upon with the buddings of hope, and the expectations of pardon, lead us to repentance; we begin to loathe ourſelves, and to feel for, and mourn over, a much abuſed Saviour. This influence is pure and truly evangelical, and not legal; for legal operations lead us wholly to pity ſelf, and to rebel againſt God. The former is

drawn forth by believing views of a reconciled father, the latter ſprings up from the conceptions of an inexorable judge. Whatever diſcoveries thou haſt had of the ſinfulneſs of thy nature, thy paſt life, and of thy aſſumption of the miniſterial office, without either call to it, or qualifications for it, it is light that hath made it manifeſt, for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light; wherefore he ſaith, Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and come to Chriſt, and he ſhall give thee light. God hath done great things for thee; how many poor, blinded, preſumptuous, young coxcombs, have run into the ſacred office, blinded and puffed up by Satan, with no other ſanction than that of old women. They may well be called *my lady's men*, for they know nothing of *my Lord*; but God hath arreſted thee, and undeceived thee, and convinced thee of the need of a better *patron*, while numbers of them are left to run on, deceiving and being deceived, and darkening counſel by words without knowledge. All fruitfulneſs, my ſon, depends upon union with the living Vine; God doth not expect grapes from thorns, nor figs from thiſtles, any more than we do. All that are *in* Chriſt by the Father's choice, and that are preſerved *in* Chriſt and called, muſt be purged before they can bring forth fruit; every branch in that covenant Head the Father takes in hand, and thou muſt be purged, not only from thy old ſins, but

from

from the whole of thy former profeſſion, from thy former miniſtry, and from all thy falſe confidence in it: and theſe purging draughts are not palatable, though they are profitable; bitter herbs muſt be eaten with the paſſover-offering, and we muſt drink of the wine that Wiſdom hath mingled, as well as of the new wine of the kingdom. The work goes ſweetly on—God works, and thou canſt not let it. He hath long worked in thee to will, and he is beginning to work in thee to do alſo—faith is ſtruggling, hope is abounding, and the captive exile is haſtening that he may be looſed, that he may not die in the pit, and that his bread may not fail.—God bleſs him——

W. H. S.S.

LETTER XXXIII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

I CANNOT but return many and ſincere thanks to my beſt of friends for the *ſavoury and ſweet morſel* he ſent me in his laſt. There I found it, and I eat it, and it was the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Some hints droped in it led me into a large field; and the matter was ſo ſuitable and applicable to my own caſe, that I am perſuaded none but he who knows our thoughts, and wants too, could direct you to ſend it. O! how ſweet is the light! and a pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to behold the ſun. But I am unworthy of the leaſt of his mercies. O! what a heaven it is to enjoy his preſence, though it is but a little! I cannot deſcribe unto you what a comfortable, ſweet, and glorious ſeaſon I had laſt Sunday night, in delivering a diſcourſe from that portion—*In that day it ſhall be ſaid to Jeruſalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be ſlack.* I could not but be aſtoniſhed at my light, the power I felt, my readineſs to ſpeak, and the home-ſtrokes I could give the conſcience of the ſinner, and then go away without ſtopping to belabour him

him for half an hour together with the terrors of God, which, I believe, only confounds, darkens, and hardens him. Nor was I elated or carried away with glee; but a ſweet, humbling, melting frame, followed, ſuch as I feel at certain ſeaſons, particularly of late, in private with the Lord. O! how I do like ſuch ſeaſons of weeping and mourning at his feet! But oh! ſuch as theſe come but ſeldom! I wiſh they were oftener. I delight much in them; nor do I wiſh, at preſent, to be raiſed higher, nor aſpire to high things. It is my wiſh that the Almighty would humble me as much as he pleaſes; and that his bleſſed Spirit would give me much of this godly ſorrow: godly ſorrow I hope it is, for I find my ſpirit much meekened under it, more reſigned to the Lord's will and way; and it is my deſire that he would not ſuffer me any more to contend with him for my own way, for he has never come in that yet. When I have prayed him to remove my pain, my troubles, diſtreſſes, and darkneſs, and to make me eaſy and comfortable, I have not ſucceeded; but when I have aſked for patience to bear, and reſignation to his will, he has hearkened to me, and I find he gives it me. Why ſhould he take the yoke from the neck of ſuch an untoward, reſtleſs, ſtubborn bullock, that was never accuſtomed to it before, and was ſo loth to bow his neck under it? and why ſhould he let a proud aſpiring rebel into the higheſt room, before he has ſat in the loweſt place? He never will do ſo. We muſt firſt ſit alone and

mid keep

keep ſilence. Indeed I find the loweſt place a ſweet ſituation; I never thought it was ſo. I had formed an idea of a dreadful hole; I looked for and expected greater puniſhment; I lived in expectation of more wrath revealed, and my chains to be yet made heavier, and can hardly believe ſomehow that the Lord will let me eſcape ſo light. I have long feared and dreaded greater torments; but, inſtead of that, quietneſs and peace I feel, and hope and joy ſpringing up within. I cannot tell you now that I can ſee my life ſecured; but I can tell you that I am at preſent quiet, happy, and comfortable, come what will of me. O! my friend, and dearly beloved, go on! no enemy ſhall ever prevail againſt you; every one that contradicts ſhall be found a liar: what they ſhall ſay or do ſtands for nothing; but what God hath ſaid will ſtand for ever. My cold is ſomething better. God bleſs you.

J. J.

LETTER XXXIV.

To the Rev. Mr. J———.

I AM thankful to my God, my ſon, that any morſel of ſavoury meat ſhould be communicated to thee through the inſtrumentality of ſo unworthy a ſervant. There are very few whom God hath quickened, and to whom he hath given a keen appetite after ſpiritual proviſion, but what can eat of the diſhes of my cooking: the full ſoul loatheth the honeycomb, but to the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet; even reproofs, rebukes, burdens, fears, terrors, wrath, and bondage, to ſuch a ſoul, are better than nothing; and if the heart be made honeſt, he had rather have theſe than be at eaſe in Zion. I am much delighted at thy admiſſion into ſo large a field; I hope ſhortly to hear of thy getting out of that ſtrait into a large place, where there ſhall be no ſtraitneſs, and that he will ſet thy feet in a large room. Light is ſweet only to thoſe who have been in the dark regions of the ſhadow of death, all others hate the light, nor will they come to it. The wonders that you performed in the pulpit do not in the leaſt ſurpriſe me; I expect ſhortly to hear the old report repeated

repeated—namely, *that John is riſen again from the dead, and that mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him.* It is true, the terrors of God, and the flames of wrath, cannot woo nor win the heart, in the preſent ſtate that man is in through the fall. The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and the law worketh wrath. The more the terrors of the law operate on the ſinner's heart, the more the enmity and rebellion of the ſinner is ſtirred up againſt it, till the very gulf itſelf appears to be open between God and the ſoul; and, until Chriſt appears, there can be no way of reconciliation open, nor any hope of nearneſs and acceſs, much leſs of communion and fellowſhip, and an eternal enjoyment of his preſence in heaven. The carnal mind cannot be ſubject to the law of God, but will rebel and fight againſt it, as long as the law diſcharges one curſe at the ſinner, even if this war ſhould continue to all eternity; for there is no word of reconciliation, nor mediator, in the diſmal regions of hopeleſs priſoners. Moſt ſeeking ſinners are much out in their expectations of the firſt glorious appearance of Chriſt to them; they expect ſubmiſſion, meekneſs, contrition, godly ſorrow, patience, repentance, humility, &c. &c. to operate previous to his coming as ſo many preparatory operations either to engage him, allure him, or elſe to pave the way for him; but for my part I had none of theſe harbingers or forerunners. There was nothing in me but guilt, ſhame, fear, rebellion, deſ-

peration, and downright madneſs, and a determination to ſeek his face and ſue for mercy no more. At this time he came; and he brought all that was good along with him. *His reward was with him, and his work before him*; and the firſt view that ever my faith had of him, was that of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and out of his fulneſs I received, and that grace for grace; for the law came to me (with the accuſations) of Moſes, but grace and truth came to my ſoul by Jeſus Chriſt, who ſilenced Moſes as my Advocate, and anſwered all his demands as my Surety, and ſent him off from the mount of tranſfiguration, while Jeſus and his poor diſciple were left alone, admiring and wondering at each other. He ſeemed pleaſed that he had caught the loſt ſheep, and I wept for joy that I had found the chief Shepherd. I believe that the miniſtering angels attended on me before Jeſus came, and that it was they who articulated the word that God ſpoke to me; but I believe that there were none ſtanding near when the firſt glorious viſit was paid, and the marriage knot tied. It was ſomething like the marriage of our firſt parents; God the Father draws us to the ſecond Adam, as *Eve* was brought to the firſt, or elſe we ſhould never come; the Spirit reveals the wedding garment to faith, and faith puts it on, and Chriſt immediately embraces the ſoul in his own robe, and becomes one ſpirit with it, and the ſole and whole poſſeſſor of

it. Thy preſent ſenſations under the operation of the Spirit of God will humble thee, ſtrip thee, and empty thee, more than all the terrors that have gone before; nothing can ſtand before the ruſhing mighty wind that fills the houſe, and that proclaims the great Deliverer, and the year of jubilee at hand. Thy expectations of more wrath ſpring from a conſciouſneſs of thy juſt deſerts; but God exacts of us far leſs than our iniquities deſerve—he hath never dealt with us according to our ſins, nor rewarded according to our iniquities. He ſtays the rough wind in the day of the eaſt wind, leſt, like Jonah, we faint, and chooſe death rather than life.

God bleſs thee, &c.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XXXV.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEARLY BELOVED FATHER IN CHRIST,

Grace, mercy, and peace, attend you, from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I THANK God, whom I lamely serve, with pure conscience (as touching one part), that without ceasing (when I am in my right mind) I have remembrance of you in my prayers, greatly desiring to see you at B—— and G——, especially if I could conceive that you would meet me, not as a *pastor*, but as the poor crawling tailor of B——. What I say is not a jest, but a real, genuine, experimental truth, and so you will find it: nevertheless, I think we should all jump for joy if the Lord would permit you to come amongst us, and I hope, with the rest of us, that he will; for, be assured, that our hearts and houses, such as they are, will all be open to you.

I received your kind letters, and am ashamed of myself for giving you so much trouble; may God

reward you, and I truſt he will. There is ſome conſolation to be drawn, when I find that in ſome meaſure I ſee eye to eye with you; I can find the effect of your correſpondence with me is gradually this: Satan gets expoſed, truth gets cleared up, and myſelf in ſome meaſure eſtabliſhed; ſo that I hope, by this, by trials, and by truth, I ſhall at length be more eſtabliſhed in the faith. I have been in thoſe chambers of imagery you ſpeak of, and am not altogether quit of them to this day; I am glad you mentioned them. I uſed to be glad when night came, when all buſtle, noiſe, and diſtraction of the world ceaſed, that I might be free to recollect, to pray, and, if I could, to meditate; but when I have been the moſt intent in prayer, theſe intruding viſitants would come, ſo that I muſt attend upon them: I could not conceive the occaſion of them, or how they came; I uſed to think it was my own vain imaginations, or that it was ſomething like when I was a child, I uſed to preſs my eyes with my hand, which produced to my underſtanding, or to the eye of my mind, various coloured phantoms, ſuch as blue, red, &c. but theſe figures uſed to come, for the moſt part, when I was the moſt cloſely engaged in prayer, and it has been ſo effected ſometimes, that the eye of my mind has been cloſely fixed upon theſe things before I have been aware, though but juſt before I have been groaning out my heart before God in fervency of ſoul; but when I have perceived it, I have been put in confuſion and

diſorder. Sometimes there would be preſented a beautiful ***, neat ***, and every way attracting and ſuitable for what the devil intended; ſometimes would be introduced various *** faces, and Satan would change them very faſt, firſt one, and then another, that I might be kept in amuſement with variety; and ſometimes he has preſented the moſt terrible objects, and frightful figures, that I hardly think ever eyes beheld, firſt one, and then another, that I have even ſhrunk and trembled at the very ſight; and with theſe things I have been amuſed, or rather diſordered, betimes, for a long time together. I began to think, if it proceeded as related above, that I could bring them to myſelf; and at night I tried, but I found I could do no ſuch thing: then I began to conſider what tendency they had, and I ſoon found that they led my mind from God, or kept me from coming to him; and here I eſpied the cloven foot, and uſed my weapons againſt him accordingly, and he has not been with me, in this way, and with ſuch powerful force, ſince; he now only comes in that way as a ſhort viſitant, and is gone again, for I verily believe he knows that I can put my hand upon that cockatrice-den. Your letter gave a good deal of light to me concerning this very thing; theſe are ſome of the high things St. Paul ſpeaks of, that would exalt themſelves againſt the knowledge of God, which our God mercifully caſts down in all his elect; and I wiſh I could ſay that all my imaginations that are

contrary

contrary to his will were caſt down alſo, and that every thought might be brought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt; and, according to my preſent feelings, I put my hearty Amen.

My dearly beloved, the contents of your letters reſpecting my being a preacher has troubled me very much; you have gotten from a ſuppoſition to a poſitive declaration, that it has been revealed to you ſome time: I declare it made me tremble like an aſpen leaf. I can no longer look upon the matter as I have done in times paſt; there is no one can tell the trouble that I have in my mind about it: if I look into myſelf, I find no ability or qualification for it; if I look into the Bible, I find it a ſealed book; if I look to God, I have not lately had any acceſs; if I look to my ſituation in life, my way ſeems hedging up; if I look to the people, I am quite confounded; if I run unſent of God, I can expect nothing but his curſe; and if I keep back contrary to his will, I can expect nothing but (what I am greatly afraid of) his rod. If ever a poor creature needed the prayers of the children of God, I do; therefore let me beg of you, and thoſe that really fear God, to intreat our Lord Jeſus Chriſt on my behalf, that theſe crooked things may be made ſtraight, and that theſe rough places may be made plain. And yet what puzzles me, my converſation is made a bleſſing to the people; for there is ſeldom or ever a ſabbath-night comes, but ſome one or other gets a bleſſing; almoſt all the church, at one time

time or other, hath received a bleſſing through my converſation, and they ſeem all gaping in high expectation that I ſhall be paſtor over them. To keep away from them I dare not, to go to them I am afraid.

Some time back I had a dream: I ſeldom notice dreams, becauſe they may be occaſioned by various things, but I thought there was ſomething ſingular in this.—I dreamt I was in a large broad place, it was a ſhallow pond, and the water was only up to the ancles, and here I was fiſhing; but ſomehow the waters left the place, and the fiſh were left in holes; I ſaw them ſtruggling in the holes, with their tails in the water, and their mouths gaping for the water, with their eyes and their mouths ſteadfaſtly directed toward me; they had ſpeckles upon them; I thought they were ſuch fiſh as I had never ſeen before, and I could not tell which way to lay hold of them: I remember ſomebody ſaid they came from London about ten years ſince, but a certain perſon gave a ſhout, and I awoke, and behold it was a dream. It was made out to me the next day, towards night, that it was a type of the church ſtate at G——, which I found in ſome ſenſe to anſwer very much indeed; and there is ſome part of it, even at this preſent period, made evident; and there is ſomething yet to come: the people's eyes, mouths, ears, and hearts, are at this time gaping in expectation of a bleſſing through me, and I, a poor blind fool, know not how to lay hold, what to ſay, or how

how to act; but at preſent I go loaded thither, and come home again the ſame. They have been at me to read a chapter, as you mentioned in a former letter, and, if I ſaw any thing in it, only to give them my thoughts; at laſt I agreed, and laſt ſabbath was the firſt time. Lately, when I came home, I begged of God, if this was conſiſtent with his will, that he would be pleaſed to direct me to a chapter, and enlighten my underſtanding in it; I think I had not been ten minutes before theſe words came acroſs my mind (2 Cor. v. 19) *that God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.* However I was all the week, till Friday, muddling with the fore part of the chapter, the pooreſt, diſtreſſedeſt creature living, praying and groaning, but I could not get on. This ſame day I received a letter from our beloved friend Mr. O———, which was a little conſolation to me, and through it I was led more to the particular words that I had on ſabbath-night, and I think it would be impoſſible to deſcribe the ſenſations that I felt; but I read the chapter and told them what I ſaw, at leaſt ſo far as I could utter it; when I came to the 19th verſe, I endeavoured to ſay ſomething more from it, for I ſaw it contained the commiſſion that is given to every real miniſter of the goſpel, and is the ſum and ſubſtance of the whole; I attempted to ſhew (but very lamely and with a deal of ſhame) how God was reconciled through Chriſt,

and

and that he was ſtill reconciling by his Spirit; I ſhewed how I ſaw God in the law, and how I ſaw him in Chriſt; I endeavoured to bring it home in the experience and application of it, but I was quite confounded: there, thought I to myſelf, is not this ſufficient for you, are you not ſatisfied now, that you have no buſineſs with theſe things? My anſwer was, Quite ſatisfied indeed; and concluded that I was one of thoſe preſumptuous fools that muſt be meddling; but this is the laſt time. Yet for all this my mind was led to ſpeak, and I thought I had a little light into ſome of the ſecret workings of ſome parts of my former experience, that how a man might ſay, and be ſure in his underſtanding and reaſon, that he had no idea of coming by the works of the law; yet for all this the law works ſometimes ſo ſecretly in experience, that they could not tell what was the matter with them, nor what quarter it came from. I pointed out the ſenſations, and alſo their thoughts in thoſe times, and the drift and tendency they had, that the native enmity and rebellion of the heart was ſtirred up, and coldneſs, deadneſs, darkneſs, and confuſion, were the conſequences; here Chriſt profited nothing, for they were hewing out to themſelves ciſterns, broken ciſterns that could hold no water, and, ſo far as in them lay, were rejecting the counſel of God againſt themſelves, and overturning God's appointed way in the ſalvation of

ſinners,

ſinners, and proved that it was of more conſequence than it ſeemed to be; I ſhewed that the law required perfection, which was no where to be found but in Chriſt Jeſus; and the goſpel required nothing but ſenſible ſinners, without that money that they wanted, or that price that they would fain bring for it; for *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs*, &c. And by theſe means the ſecret counſels of their hearts were made manifeſt, and I came home to their very feelings, and I believe ſome of them were ready to ſay, *that God was in me of a truth.*

I have given you, my beloved friend, a ſhort uncouth account of our going on, and we all hope to ſee your face this ſummer, which we ſhall pray for; and if the Lord will permit you to come, we ſhall be glad if you will let us know a fortnight before, as we would let the friends know round about us. I muſt beg that you will write to me the firſt opportunity; in the mean time I ſhall beg of God to direct you. Pleaſe to give my love to Mr. O———, and tell him not to be ſurpriſed at my not writing to him at this time; for, from what I heard Mr. B——— ſay, I expect he will be down amongſt us this month, and gladly will he be received; but how they have ſettled it I don't know. Give my love to your ſpouſe, and all that love Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity

cerity and truth; and let me beg an intereſt in your prayers, that the Lord would guide and direct me according to the counſel of his own will; for the things that trouble me now are the greateſt that ever came acroſs me, next to the ſalvation of my ſoul, and if ever a poor wretch wanted counſel, direction, and prayer, I do.

May the Lord bleſs you, and keep you alive, and in proſperity in your own ſoul, and grant you onward a burning loving zeal for his cauſe and intereſt, is the prayer of your unworthy brother in tribulation and affliction, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt,

A. R.

N. B. The friends deſire their kind love to you, likewiſe my wife.

LETTER XXXVI.

To Mr. A—— R——, *at B*——.

The epiſtle of my ſon arrived ſafe, and I humbly thank him for his kind invitation, as I do purpoſe to ſee this my ſon's face once in the fleſh before my final diſmiſſion from the ſtage of action. Should God grant me this favour, and direct my way to you, come when I may I am ſure that I ſhall come to you in the fullneſs of the bleſſings of the goſpel of peace. The outcry that Satan (by his trumpeters) raiſes againſt me and my books, is among the all things that work for good, and will fall out for the furtherance of the goſpel: by theſe means the curioſity of ſome will be excited; the critic will be prompted to try his ſkill upon me; the wiſe and prudent to make full proof of their judgment; the envious bond-child will come to hear for himſelf, in hopes of being confirmed in his malice and envy; the doubting ſoul will pray to have the writing on the fleſhly tables of his heart read and interpreted; and the ſtarving ſoul will expect a morſel of the bread of life. Theſe envious ſtirs and evil reports are harbingers and heralds permitted by God to awaken

awaken and arouſe a neighbourhood, and to gather them together from every quarter; and come they ſhall, if they belong to Chriſt, notwithſtanding all the cautions, warnings, and charges, that ſhall be given them to the contrary. Every labourer has his line of labour, all his work is appointed to him. No ſoul under heaven ſhall ever do one branch of that work which is allotted to me. I muſt perform my taſk, and ſtand in my lot; I muſt fight my own fight, and finiſh my own courſe: *The righteous and the wiſe, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him*; though every ſaint knows it by the love of God within him.

The dream, my ſon, is from God. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net caſt into the ſea.* The goſpel in the power of it is very entangling, and when a poor ſinner is taken and effectually wrapped up in it, though it ſeems a weak and ſimple thing, yet it holds exceeding faſt; and the more the ſinner plunges, the more he is bound; and yet it is eaſy and very pleaſant when he can, with unfeigned ſubmiſſion, compoſe himſelf, reſign, and lay ſtill.

It is caſt into the ſea of this world, where every thing is unſettled and in perpetual motion; new generations are *flowing* in, and old generations are *ebbing* out; and the wicked in it are like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.

But this *net gathers of every kind*; *ſome good, ſome bad*;

bad; the choſen veſſel is caught, entangled, bound up, braced, held faſt, and for ever kept in, and kept cloſe. But ſome are caught only by the head, which ſort ſoon break forth, being held only by the gills; others are taken by the tail, which only holds them from doing miſchief to others; theſe are fiſh of prey, like the ſhark, &c. &c. which appear harmleſs for a while, but are not to be truſted in the net, nor yet in the hands of the fiſherman, becauſe their voracious nature is not changed: *and when the net is full they draw it to ſhore, and gather the good into veſſels, but caſt the bad away.* Mat. xiii. 46, 47. The end of the world is the ſhore of this troubled ſea, when the proud waves of ungodly men, and the billows of ungodlineſs and wrong, ſhall roar, daſh, and foam no more; then the good fiſh ſhall be gathered into veſſels, and poſſeſs their veſſels in glory and honour, when the bad ones ſhall be drowned in deſtruction and perdition. *The Lord hath made thee a fiſher of men.*

The fiſh looking and gaping at thee, was to ſhew thee that they wanted the waters of the ſanctuary, the waters of life; and ſo it is written, *And it ſhall come to paſs, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whitherſoever the rivers ſhall come, ſhall live: and there ſhall be a great multitude of fiſh, becauſe theſe waters ſhall come thither: for they ſhall be healed, and every thing ſhall live whither the river cometh.* Ezek. xlvii. 9. Here is the Holy Spirit of promiſe, and his abundant grace, flowing from Jeſus Chriſt,

who is our temple and ſanctuary, conveying life to various parts of the ſea of this troubled world and healing them; and the effects of this healing is, that a multitude of fiſh appear wherever theſe waters come: and the appearance of theſe is intended to ſet the fiſhermen to work, and ſo it follows—*And it ſhall come to paſs, that the fiſhers ſhall ſtand upon it, from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they ſhall be a place to ſpread forth nets; their fiſh ſhall be according to their kinds, as the fiſh of the great ſea, exceeding many.* Ver. 10. Upon this river of life the fiſhermen are to ſtand, and upon every place where life and motion appear, or among thoſe that ſeem to live and move, are the nets to be caſt forth and ſpread out; *but the miry places and the marſhes ſhall not be healed, they ſhall be given to ſalt* (ver. 11), as Lot's wife was, for her unbelief; not ſalted with grace, but ſalted with fire.

The *ſpeckles* that appeared on the fiſh in thy dream want no explanation; thou wilt, in ſome future period, find enough of them to make thy heart ache. Whether the fiſh were ſent from London or not, I cannot tell; but the little life, truth, and power, that is among them, did at firſt principally ſound out from our little deſpiſed hill in this great metropolis. Thine ignorance in this buſineſs of fiſhing, and not knowing how to handle them, is not to be wondered at; the power that catches them and holds them faſt is from above, it is not of us. Peter and his companions were taught this, by

 toiling

toiling all night and taking nothing; but when the God of the ſea and of the dry land gave the word, great was the draught of fiſhes.

Thy beginning, my ſon, is wonderful; you handled a myſtery at your firſt ſetting off, which thouſands who have been called goſpel miniſters never ſaw, even when they finiſhed their courſe. To deſcribe the riſe of legal bondage, the entrance of it into the heart, the dreadful workings of it there; the rebellion, enmity, pride, and ſtubbornneſs, that it produces; the blindneſs, hardneſs of heart, and ignorance, that attend it; the dry, dead, and barren ſtate of thoſe that are influenced by it; and the hatred and malice that ſuch ſouls harbour and cheriſh againſt all thoſe that enjoy the love of God; together with the ſecret and ſometimes almoſt imperceptible fermentations of this leaven of the Phariſees—is a work that well becomes an evangeliſt. A miniſter of the letter never ſaw it, therefore he cannot deſcribe it; he that has ever felt the ſpirit of liberty knows its oppoſite, and will cry and pray for it; *reſtore unto me the joys of thy ſalvation, and uphold me with thy free ſpirit; then will I teach tranſgreſſors thy way, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.* Theſe are the men who are proper teachers; all others ſhould be ſwift to hear and ſlow to ſpeak, and ſuch men ſhould be ſlow to wrath when wiſe men bid them hold their peace.

I have to tell you, with joy, that there are five places in the country where the word and power of

God hath ſounded out from our little deſpicable hill of Zion, and is going ſweetly on; love, life, and light, ſpread their flames, ſtreams, and rays, ſecretly abroad in a wonderful manner; the bleſſed work of travailing and bringing forth goes ſweetly on, and thoſe that come forth appear to be proper children, yea wiſe children, for they know their own father, as God declares that all his children ſhall know him. In three of theſe places there hath been what is called the goſpel preached for upwards of twenty years, and not one real child of God ever brought forth, that I have found yet; nothing but a ſpurious race of monſtrous creatures, between a wolf and a ſheep. A ſight of this has fired my zeal not a little, and has made me wiſh that I was an itinerant; and the goodneſs of God to his poor deſpiſed ſervant has humbled me in the duſt before him, and excited my love and gratitude to him not a little; and my affections, which met with ſuch an extinguiſhing damp in the cruel treatment that I met with for conſcience ſake in London, have been more abundantly drawn out to theſe poor ſouls in the country, inſomuch that in every ſecret prayer of mine they are preſented before me, ſaying, *Tell my beloved that I am ſick of love*; or elſe, *Pray come over to Macedonia and help us.* My honeſt and faithful fellow-labourer, Mr. *Jenkins*, labours with great ſucceſs: God has ſet him to root up, to grub up; and to throw down, and he begins alſo to build and to plant, although he labours among a people who have been for years deceived, ſeared, hardened,

hardened, and braced up in nothing but an empty profeſſion, by thoſe daubers commonly called my L——'s men; and rightly named, for the greater part of them differ widely from what the ſcriptures call, *a man of God*; and this numbers in *Lewes*, and other places, now feel, lament, and confeſs, with grief and ſorrow of heart. My ſpirit has long been at G———, and I now hope for a proſperous journey to you by the will of God, and that I ſhall be ſomewhat filled with your company. The more I ſee my labours owned and bleſſed, the more my fingers itch to be at it; and ſhould my God fill the hopes and expectations which I have long indulged of thy uſefulneſs, I think I ſhall have joy upon joy. The old ſerpent loſes ground; he has, for ſome years paſt, filled almoſt univerſally the pulpits of this country with a parcel of tools of his own trumping up, which he employs in his own intereſt, and uſes them two ways: ſome he ſets to conterfeit the Spirit's work, and the grace that he produces in the ſouls of his people; and others are employed in ridiculing and crying down all the life and power of religion, and making it to ſtand in human wiſdom, and in bodily exerciſe. But ſome few begin to have their eyes open, and to ſee the uſeleſſneſs of theſe poor drones, and how they have been kept in bondage, ſtarving in their ſouls, and wrecked with perpetual ſuſpenſe by them. Pray tender my kind reſpects to your ſpouſe, and to all that love him at G———; and believe me to be yours, in the ſtrongeſt and beſt of ties,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XXXVII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR AND BELOVED FRIEND,

I HAVE been long expecting the favour of a few lines from you, and ſometimes wondering what can be the cauſe of the delay. Satan cannot perſuade me that you either neglect me or forget me, but that it is a multiplicity of concerns that occupy your time, head, and hands, and I doubt not but that they are all full enough; yet none upon earth would be *more* glad to hear of your welfare, ſucceſs, and proſperity, than myſelf. It is true I have loſt your burden for ſome time now, and perhaps before you loſt it, or at leaſt about the ſame time. I bore a part of it for a while, and I had ſtrength for the time to do it, and to plead the righteous cauſe of his ſervant with God; but this was given me for your ſake, and a debtor I am to you, and that of more than I ever ſhall be able to pay. When I was with you laſt, I ſaw clear enough that God was on your ſide, and that none of them that had riſen up againſt you would prevail; that he had given you the necks of all your enemies; and that you would pinch

them

them and gall them, till confuſion, diviſion, contradiction, diſtraction, and madneſs, would ſcatter them over the face of the whole earth. No weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper, and every tongue that riſes up in judgment againſt thee thou ſhalt condemn; this is the heritage of the ſervants of the Lord, and their righteouſneſs is of me, ſaith the Lord. God ſent you on that journey to diſcover the hypocrite, that he might no longer reign, leſt the people ſhould be enſnared. This is a part of the work which the Lord has called you to, and you muſt be content.

And now, my dear friend, my thoughts have returned much to their old channel—I am gone again, like the ſhadow that declineth, and am toſſed up and down like the locuſts, and have been ſadly ſo for ſome weeks back, without light, life, or power, moping about in darkneſs that might be felt; often concluding to give all up, and to try at it no longer; and what prevents me ſometimes from doing it I cannot tell. One day laſt week Mrs. H—— ſhewed me two letters ſhe had lately received from you; in one of them you touch on this paſſage—*come with me from Lebanon, my ſpouſe:* as ſoon as I glanced upon it, a ray appeared, and I ſaw where I was, and what I wanted; but it went out of my thoughts, nor did it recur all day Saturday, though I had purpoſed to preach from it. I laboured all day with another text, but with little ſucceſs, and went to bed at night as dark, peeviſh, fretful, rebellious, and miſerable,

ſerable as a mortal could be, and continued all night ſo in my ſleep; but after I got up in the morning, and ſat down in my ſtudy, the paſſage came all at once to my mind, with ſuch ſweet light and power, that I cried out, Draw me, and I will run after thee. I had matter enough to preach that day, and I believe I never preached ſo before. Thus I am, but I cannot underſtand this work. Sometimes the beloved Friend ſeems to be coming, but it is but juſt a diſtant ſight, and he is ſoon gone again; and when I get to the old hole, it appears, I think, clear to me that all is nothing—nothing but legal pain, legal comfort, and legal hope. What! to be always cutting, tearing, rooting, rebuking, and reproving ſin! this is beggarly work, and I am really tired of it; to be always at the *dung-gate*, and to have nothing to eat or drink, is poor encouragement.

God bleſs thee.

J. J.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To the Rev. J—— J——.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST JESUS,

I HAVE been out for five weeks running, viſiting the brethren in the little adjacent towns, to ſee how they do; and I find that they which have followed the Lord are all alive to this day. I have got a cold upon me, which I am very ſubject to, either in my heart or in my head—the former is by far the worſt, as nothing but a freſh ſenſe of divine love will ever remove it.

This laſt burden bowed me a little for about a fortnight; I felt the weight, and I was ſure that that burden would ſhortly go from me, or I ſhould go from it; which, were it not for two entanglements that hung faſt by my ſkirts, and brought me into a ſtrait, I ſhould not have heſitated one moment about that end of the balance which proves all fleſh to be vanity.

But heavy as it was, fervent and unremitted prayer made it vaniſh in an hour, and it returned no more; ſince which day I have gone upright. I call this the burden of the word of the Lord, becauſe it is a ſtrict adherence

adherence to that which brought it on; and as God knew this, he ſuffered me to caſt it upon him, and he ſuſtained me; he interwove his compaſſion with my tender feelings for his honour, and mingled his reſentment and threatenings with my indignation at his enemies; he let me know that I, and my cauſe too, were his own, and that he would plead it, and avenge himſelf of thoſe hypocrites: and on whomſoever thoſe threatenings of the Lord fall, they will grind that enemy to powder; I may not ſee it, but others ſhall, and confeſs that there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

I have not the leaſt doubt but the hand of God is in all this; for, ſhall there be evil in the city, eſpecially in the city of our ſolemnities, and the Lord hath not done it? My antagoniſt is the devil himſelf in the heart and mouth of a damnable impoſtor, and to try ſuch, and prove them liars, is one branch of the miniſterial work, and a work which is highly commended by Chriſt himſelf; this I know, but it is grievous to fleſh and blood; however, ſelf muſt be denied daily by thoſe that would follow the Lamb through evil report and good report.

The pool of Bethesda has five porches—the firſt is God's irrevocable decree; the ſecond, is the bowels of his eternal love; the third, is the covenant-head in which they were choſen; the fourth, is the promiſes of God in which they are all included; and the fifth, is the guardianſhip of divine Providence, by which they are all preſerved in Chriſt

Jeſus

Jeſus till called. Theſe five porches at the door of the houſe of mercy ſcreen the elect from the inclemency of the weather, and from the winds of deſtructive error—*all that came before me were thieves and robbers, but the ſheep did not hear them:* in theſe porches they are ſecured from the floods of temptation, from the rain, hail, and winds of deſolating judgments; from all the ſtorms and tempeſts of mount Sinai; and from the deſtruction of ſin, the ſentence of damnation, and the wrath to come.

In theſe porches lay a great many ſick and impotent folk, even to this day, which want a cure, and wait for the angel of the covenant to come down and move the *waters*. By waters is meant not the love of God, for that is a *river*, not a pool, a river that makes glad the city of our God; nor doth it mean the Spirit or grace of God, for theſe are called ſprings of living water, not pools; much leſs can it mean God, who is a fountain of living waters; nor Chriſt, who is a well of ſalvation, for who can *trouble* theſe? The church, indeed, is called a pool—*The parched ground ſhall become a pool*, Iſaiah xxxv. 7. *I will make the wilderneſs a pool of water*, &c. Iſa. xli. 18. The church often wants ſtirring up, eſpecially when, like the pool, ſhe ſettles too much on her old earthly ſediment; a little ſtirring troubles the *people*, which are often in ſcripture called waters, and then freſh life and vigour, zeal and fervour, are felt; prayer goes up, and life and light come down, and the power, which at ſuch a time attends the word, often

often heals the ſoul of whatever diſeaſe it hath: three poor invalids have been healed ſince the laſt deſcent of the angel; and how many more have experienced the ſame efficacy I cannot tell, *for they are not found to return to give glory to God, ſave theſe ſtrangers*; theſe are ſent away in peace, and certain I am that their faith has made them whole. I hear the noiſy and predominant clamours of unbelief, in this thine epiſtle, which is loud enough to drown every other voice. Unbelief is, I know, an eternal bar, even in the mind of Satan himſelf, which confines every thought of that wicked ſpirit which may at any time break looſe in vain ſearch after a door of hope; and, at certain ſeaſons, when he is allowed to have acceſs to my ſoul (ſtrange as it may ſeem), I can even feel my own ſpirit influenced, confined, and ſhut up at times in unbelief, and attended with every rebellious, deſperate, envious, and malignant thought, that rankles in the very devil himſelf.

Dated from Mizpeh, the watch-tower, near to Galeed, bound to Mahanaim; where I hope to meet with the Lord's hoſt, and to reject all the aſſiſtance of Eſau, and all his company. Ever thine.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XXXIX.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

It hath long been on my mind to tell you the dealings of God with my ſoul, which I beg you to peruſe.

I was born of poor, but hard-working parents, in the town of Tewkſbury, in Glouceſterſhire; my father died when I was very young, and my mother ſtrove hard for a living for us. When I was about ſeven or eight years old I was put to, what we call in the country, a Free School, to read and write, and was there till I was about thirteen; we uſed to be kept cloſe to church, and at particular times, after the ſervice was over, we uſed to ſtand up on forms, or ſtools, to be aſked our catechiſm by the parſon. I only relate this to make room for a dream I had at this time: as Elihu ſays to Job, *For God ſpeaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not; in a dream, in a viſion of the night, when deep ſleep falleth upon men in ſlumbering upon the bed.* I dreamt all us ſchool-boys were ſtanding in a row as aforetime, and God Almighty came and took one from here, and another from there, and I trembled very much with fear leſt he ſhould not take me; but at laſt he came, took me by the hand, and put me amongſt the reſt of his choice. I have thought on that dream

dream in a ſtate of nature many times, though I had no knowledge of God's choice, or his electing love. But to proceed.—When I was about thirteen years of age I was put apprentice to a wheelwright; but being of a roving mind, and not uſed very well, I ran away, and came up to London; where I worked at ſeveral employments, ſuch as ſawing, gardening, footman, brewer's ſervant, and at laſt went to ſea; and, as God the Spirit ſhall bring it to my remembrance, I will tell a little of my ſea-voyage, for now begin my troubles.

At the beginning of the American war I entered on board the Carisfort frigate, in his majeſty's ſervice, commanded by Captain Fanſhaw; we ſailed from Chatham to Quebec, where, having ſtaid ſome time, we ſailed for New York, and, arriving there at the time our fleet were about to beſiege the town, the admiral ſent our ſhip, with two more, to paſs the town up the river to land troops; in paſſing, we had to receive the conſtant fire of five or ſix forts, during which I was under great fear in my mind, not having ſeen any thing of the kind before, though I harboured ſuch a thought as this, that if I was killed in battle I ſhould go to heaven; but vain was that thought: but here the Lord ſaved me from the ſtroke, while others fell. Our captain being a very ſevere man, having flogged ſix men for a trifling fault, I thought I would run away the very firſt opportunity, and accordingly did, with two others, a few months after the town of New York was

taken; but with great difficulty we reached the town, being ſtopt ſeveral times to give an account of ourſelves, being upwards of thirty miles up the country when we ſet off; however we arrived ſafe, and went on board merchant veſſels. The ſhip I went on board of was bound for London; there I altered my name to Hodges, that being my mother's maiden name, for fear of being diſcovered, as the men of war ſearched all the merchant ſhips that went out for deſerters. I got ſafe from hence, and was bound for London; but, in a heavy gale of wind, we ſprung a leak, and were obliged to make the beſt of our way to the Weſt Indies, toiling night and day at the pumps to keep the ſhip above water; we at laſt reached St. John's, in Antigua.

Now begin my troubles. Our captain would not fulfil his promiſe of paying us our wages, in conſequence I, among ſome others, left him; but it being a very dead time of the year, the ſhipping were not yet come out, ſo that we were obliged to enter on board a man of war again; but I went, with great reluctance, ſome time after the others; nor would I have gone then, could I have got any thing elſe to do. At laſt, through neceſſity, I went on board the Portland, Admiral Young; we ſailed on a cruiſe, and put into Prince Rupert's bay, in the iſland of Dominica, to get wood and water for the cruiſe. I and two more agreed to run away the day before the ſhip ſailed, and contrived to get our things on ſ——, ready for a ſtart. On the day appointed

we

we aſcended each one a tree till night. John Moor and Tom Jones, my two companions, had been to the town of Roſeau, on this iſland, which was the reſort of the merchant veſſels; and, as we were bound for that place, we had about forty miles to travel by land.

By this time I began to be very much hardened in ſin, and the Lord knows, was he to leave us to ourſelves, we ſhould ſoon run to deſtruction.

To proceed.—We had got a river to croſs, and on the bridge over which we muſt paſs, as we could go no other way, there had been a ſentinel ſet from the ſhip to intercept deſerters; yet, as night came on, we deſcended from the trees, and drew towards the bridge, with each of us a ſtout ſtick in our hands, having agreed to ſtand true to each other, and to ruſh upon the ſentinel and knock him down, ſaying he could only kill one of us ſuppoſe he fired; but, as the Lord would have it, he was not there, and we got over unmoleſted. We travelled till the next morning, when, deſcrying a few little houſes in a valley, we went to them to get ſome refreſhment, which we did, and paid for it, though we could not underſtand the people, who were French. We agreed to ſtop till the heat of the day was over, which we did; and about four o'clock, beginning to ſet forward on our journey again, five or ſix of them came out from other houſes and ſtopt us, and made us underſtand they ſuſpected we were deſerters from a man of war, and they would take us

us up, well knowing they would get forty ſhillings for each of us; but we ſet to with our bludgeons, and cleared them off for ſome time; however they alarmed the place, and we were each of us ſurrounded in a ring. How the other two fared I know not, but as they told me afterwards. By this time there was a great number of blacks come down to aſſiſt them, and beginning to throw ſtones; at length one ſtruck me on the forehead and knocked me down; they then ran upon me, tied my hands behind me, and beat me cruelly, like men threſhing corn. I can juſt remember when they had left me, I ſuppoſe, to ſerve my companions in like manner, that a woman came to me with a ſtone ſeemingly as much as ſhe could lift, and threw it on me, ſo that I remember no more at that time. When I began to revive a little (I ſuppoſe it to be about one or two o'clock in the morning) I heard ſomebody groaning, and found myſelf tied with cords; I began to think what was the matter: my companions finding me move, aſked me if I was alive? I told them yes, but could not ſtand; and it was ſo dark we could not ſee each other; but they had carried us down on the beach by the ſea-ſide, for the ſurf to waſh us away, ſuppoſing we were dead: my companions told me they had been tied alſo, but a little child that was at the houſe had juſt come down and cut them looſe. O! the tender mercy and loving kindneſs of the Lord our God! As to the child coming to cut them looſe, I could never make out

from that day to this, for the child they ſpoke of was not, to appearance, above five years old, and I believe we were near a mile from the houſes: the Lord knows beſt how it was; but they were looſed, and they got me looſe with a great deal of trouble, they being ſo weak. We crawled on our hands and knees to get as far from that place as we could, for fear they ſhould come and throw us quite in. It was a long time before we could get on our feet, and when we did, we could not ſtoop even to waſh the blood off each other for fear of falling. They had taken all that we had from us, even our ſhoes and hats, leaving us nothing but a ſhirt and trowſers. In this diſtreſſed ſtate we begged, but none relieved us, for they could not underſtand us, nor we them; but, through God's protecting hand, we got to Roſſeau in that condition, but thought nothing about God at that time though in ſuch diſtreſs, for our hearts were hardened. Now there was a rendezvous opened there for privateers, an open houſe for all ſailors, and a joe advance to go out for two months; ſo, having no clothes, we wanted money, accordingly entered and went on board, and I believe that was a hell upon the ſea, for they were like devils, without any order, and would not mind cutting you down with their ſwords if they were angry; captain and men all alike. We had been out about a month or five weeks, and taken one prize. I was then ſeized with the bloody-flux, and very ill I was, having no hopes of recovery; but ſoon after we put into Montſerrat to ſell our prize, and the captain, knowing I was ill, deſired

desired me to go on shore with him to a doctor, which I did; but, as he stopped at one place and another, I went by myself, and having found a doctor, asked him to bleed me: he asked what was the matter with me? I told him it was no matter, if he would bleed me I would pay him for it; it came in my mind to be blooded, so he bled me. I then told him what was the matter with me; he replied, it was the worst thing I could have done; but he would let me have some stuff which would settle the matter (he meant kill or cure), which I agreed to take, for in those places they don't care much about a man's life. I got the stuff, gave him all the money I had, and went on board and took some of it, which operated in so violent a manner that my shipmate was obliged to hold me, and in a few hours put me in bed; though I had not slept for some nights before, I now fell into a dose. They that were sitting under my hammock drinking grog felt something drop on them, which on looking at they found to be blood, which proceeded from my arm, that, through violent straining, now bled afresh through bed and all, with the loss of which I was just gone; but from that time I recovered. This is the second time the Lord, in his infinite mercy, saved me from death, not cutting me off in my sins: and now for the third time.

Before we left this place, one of my companions, Tom Jones, ran away, and I never saw him afterwards; so that I and John Moor were the only

two deſerters from the Portland that returned to Roſſeau at the expiration of our cruiſe. Having got the better of my illneſs, and the merchant ſhips being ready to ſail for various parts of England, John and I were not ſettled in our minds which to chooſe, for they all wanted men; ſo having ſtaid on ſhore a few days, I went on board a ſhip which I intended in my mind to come home in, and going the next morning to ſeek for my companion at his lodgings, they told me a man of war had come into the bay the day before, and they feared he was preſſed; at the ſame time in came the preſs-gang and took hold of me and ſeveral more: I begged hard to get from them, but in vain; I ſtrove to run from them, but they knocked me down, and took me on board the frigate. As ſoon as I got on board, to my great ſurpriſe an officer, who belonged to the Portland when I left her, ſaluted me with a "How "do you do, Mr. S. T——?" informing the captain that I ran away from the Portland a few months ago. I thought I ſhould have dropped at the ſalutation; but I could not deny it. The orders were, Put him in irons along with John Moor; which was a greater ſurpriſe. When I got alone I could not help weeping; thought I, hard is my lot! I had ſtrange views of God, though my mind went after him when in trouble, but no hope that he would deliver me; and my concluſion was this, I have brought all on myſelf, and ſuffer I muſt. The next day we ſailed, when John Moor and I

were

were ſent for on the quarter deck to the captain, who ſaid it would be ſome months before they went to Antigua, where the ſhip was from which we deſerted; and aſked whether we would do our duty on deck, or be kept in irons till we went there: we made choice of the former, and I, being young and ſomewhat expert, got in favour with the captain; he ſent for me, and aſked if I would ſail with him? I anſwered, Yes, if he would ſave me from being flogged when I came to the ſhip from which I deſerted, for I was as ſure of it as I was born: he told me he would do what he could, but I was perſuaded he could not get me off; nevertheleſs he would often cheer me up, and bid me not fear; but I was ſure of it, in my own mind, if ever I went there.

In our paſſage to Barbadoes we took a prize, brought her in with us, ſold her, and ſhared the money. We lay in the midſt of a number of merchant ſhips bound for England, and I began to contrive how to eſcape the flogging, knowing we were going to Antigua from hence. Thought I, I will get a gallon of rum, and make the ſentinels drunk in the night when all are gone to bed, and make a rope faſt to an empty arm-cheſt that lay there, let it go to the ſhip's ſtern, then get down the ſtern into it, drift down to the merchantmen, and ſo get away. The thought had no ſooner ſtruck my mind than I began to provide, at night I put it in force, and all things ſeemed to bid fair;

but, juſt as I had completed the affair, the wind began to blow, it rained very heavy, and ſuch a ſea aroſe that I was afraid to venture, ſo cut the rope and let the cheſt go by itſelf; I tried the ſame ſcheme the next night, but without effect, and I believe the next day we ſailed for Antigua. Then I began to fear, having no God to truſt in, and believing I ſhould die under it; I wiſhed that God would forgive my ſins, and take me out of my miſery; this was only for fear of the ſcourge. At length we arrived in Engliſh Harbour, Antigua, where the Portland lay; then my fears began to come on, and I was quite caſt down. To explain my feelings is impoſſible.

A boat was ſent to fetch us, when, after a few compliments from the captain, we were ordered to be put in irons, and, a day or two after, ordered to prepare for a court-martial; which ſhortly took place, when we were ſentenced to receive one hundred and fifty laſhes each. When I had heard my ſentence, I aſked them to grant me a favour; upon being aſked what that was? I replied, To hang me. On which I was ordered to be put with both legs in irons, and a ſentinel placed over me with a drawn cutlaſs, and that I ſhould drink nothing but water till I was puniſhed. The day arrived; John Moor, my old companion, was taken ill, and ſent to the hoſpital for recovery, when he was to receive his puniſhment; my ſhipmates had provided a doſe for me enough to kill a horſe, it was rum and gunpowder

powder mixed together, which they tell you is to deaden the fleſh, but I felt it ſharp enough; I drank ſome of it, and then received one hundred laſhes, at the end of which I died away, being cut ſo bad, and they all, even the doctor, thought I was dead; when I came to I was naked, in a large tub of warm water, and they bathing me. Here the Lord wonderfully ſpared me to praiſe his holy name, for when I am brought to look back to ſee what my God has ſaved me from, it melts my heart in love to him; for I little thought, when I blaſphemed his name, that he had reſpect unto me in the covenant; but bleſs his holy name, who hath brought me to loath myſelf in my own ſight for my iniquities.

It would be tedious to tell of all the battles I have been in: I have ſeen many fall, yea, cloſe to me, in ſeveral engagements, but the Lord never ſuffered one ſhot even to wound me, though I was in it from the beginning of the American war to the end, which I believe was near ten years. Oh! the faithfulneſs of God to his choſen! I have often thought, if I had ſuffered theſe things for Chriſt's ſake, as the apoſtle Paul did, I ſhould have ſomewhat to glory in before the Lord, that I was counted worthy to ſuffer for him; but theſe words ſtrike me, *Haſt thou not procured all theſe things to thyſelf?*—Yes, Lord; with ſhame I own it.

Now, as the Lord the Spirit ſhall bring to my remembrance, I will relate my call and converſion in my ſimple way; for I knew nothing about re-

ligion of any kind, neither did I know even what the name of Jeſus Chriſt meant; but God, in his infinite mercy, was determined I ſhould know him whom I had ſo groſsly abuſed.

The firſt convictions I can remember to have had concerning my ſoul, was the laſt voyage I went, which brought me to look at the wicked life I had lived and was then living; this brought me on my knees to God, vowing, that if he would be pleaſed to bring me ſafe home, and provide me ſomething to do on ſhore, I would amend my life and go to church; this I had a hope he would do, becauſe I prayed. In the ſpace of a year he brought me home, and, agreeable to my requeſt, found me employment. I ſet about to perform my vow in going to church, but the devil was too ſtrong for me; for I ſoon fell into the old track of ſabbath-breaking and ſinning, and carried it on to as high a pitch as ever. The Lord ſuffered me to go on here a little ſime, to ſhew me what man is by nature; but I perceived it not. I believe I went on in the old way of ſinning for two years, and when any checks of conſcience troubled me, I ſtrove to ſmother them by going to clubs to ſing and drink. I remember I was learning ſome new ſongs, when the Lord was pleaſed, at my work, to bring all my ſins to my remembrance, which ſpoiled all my ſinging; for I was ſo wrought upon, that I thought I ſhould as ſurely be damned as I was born: it continued, and I could not ſhake it off; my companions, they came, but

all

all would not do, I could not go with them; my wife, then being in a natural ſtate, ſeeing that I was diſtreſſed in my mind, cried over me, begging to know what was the matter; yea, told me ſhe would go on her knees to me if I would but tell her. I ſaid I could not tell her what was the matter with me; but I believed I ſhould go to hell. Theſe words came on my mind, and I could not get rid of them: *What woman is there having ten pieces of ſilver, if ſhe loſe one of them, will ſhe not light a candle and ſweep the houſe diligently till ſhe has found it?* Thought I, this is ſomething of ſcripture; for the Bible was a book I had not looked into for many years before, but now I did, and it brought me on my knees to God, hoping that, if I confeſſed and prayed to God, read my Bible, and went to church, that God would have mercy upon me; however I ſet to, with a reſolution to get no further in debt, but if poſſible to pay ſome off the old ſcore. I inquired into thoſe people called methodiſts, for being away ſo many years I was ignorant of the meaning of the word methodiſt; I was informed they were a good ſet of people, ſuch as Weſley's and Whitefield's. The firſt I found out was Weſley's, in the City Road; I thought ſurely they were angels come down from heaven, and began to think, if I went according to my reſolution, God would look over what was paſt, and I ſhould ſoon be fit for heaven; but, oh! the goodneſs, mercy, and loving-kindneſs of God! he did not let me reſt here; for when I was

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getting up to that pinnacle, he threw me down and broke all my bones, by ſending his law home to my heart: then I ſaw myſelf in a dreadful ſtate; not only that I had been a ſinner, but now was, and could do nothing good. In reading the Bible, what gained my greateſt attention was, God's anger againſt ſin, and his commands to ſanctify myſelf holy unto the Lord. Well, I enquired how a man might ſanctify himſelf to the Lord; and was informed, the people who frequented the tabernacle went there on Saturday evening to ſanctify themſelves againſt Sunday. When Saturday evening came I ſet off and went; but when I came out, found myſelf more like a devil than a ſaint. At this time I was quite ignorant of the way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt: what makes me ſay ſo is, becauſe there are many who, to my knowledge, never had a change of heart, that know it is through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt they muſt be ſaved; but then, ſay they, *Jeſus Chriſt died for all:* but I was quite ignorant even of the name of Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe workmongers ſet me many taſks to do; I began to read the Bible and pray to God, as I called it, and worked hard too; till at laſt I began to feel ſuch enmity ſpring up in my heart, that I ſaid on this wiſe, Surely God is a hard God! for he ſets man to do more than he is able. Why ſhould he be ſo hard with a creature that he has made? I laboured under this a long time, yet durſt not utter the hard thoughts and enmity I had againſt him.

I became

I became acquainted with one man in particular, and would have given the world if I had been as good as him: ſaid I, if I tell that man what I feel, he will doubtleſs condemn me, and then I will give it all up. Accordingly, when we met again, I told him what I felt, what enmity I had againſt God and his word. He ſeemed ſurpriſed; and, upon my aſking him if he ever felt any thing of the kind, he anſwered me very ſternly, No! God forbid that I ſhould have enmity againſt God or his word. He left me wounded. Well, thought I, damned I ſhall be, do what I will; then began to quarrel with myſelf for living ſuch a wicked life, and with my mother for not correcting me when I ran away from my maſter: had I ſtaid with him, I might have went to church, and lived a better life than I have done; but it is too late now. I ſhall be damned! I cannot repent: well, I will give it up, and think no more about it. I did ſet off once to get drunk, but ſurely I felt a hell in my conſcience at the ſame time. I laboured here a great while, frequenting a chapel in Nightingale-lane, Eaſt Smithfield, called the Mulberry Gardens, in the Counteſs of Huntingdon's connection; at this time ſo ignorant was I, that I did not know they would grant me a ticket for a ſeat, ſo ſkulked about like a thief. Meſſrs. W——— and Jenkins preached there at that time, but I was afraid to ſpeak to any one about my ſtate. However, one evening, I ſhall never forget it, a woman, who attended there, would force her con-

verſation upon me, and drew from me many things concerning my diſtreſs, which I did not think to ſpeak of; but I had no ſooner left her, than I was ſeized with ſuch violent temptations as I never felt; it was to run down Tower-hill, right into the Thames, and drown myſelf. And I really thought that the devil ran away with me, for I ran againſt ſeveral people, and have no doubt but I knocked them down. I have viewed the ſpot many a time ſince where I ſtopt. I ran againſt a large poſt, and clung faſt hold of it, as if any body had drove me, and believe I foamed at the mouth like a mad dog till I had vent. I then burſt into tears, went up a little paſſage, and ſuppoſe I cried for a quarter of an hour, after which I found ſome compoſure of mind. I ſet off viewing my ſad ſtate, and waſhed my face at a pump, that my wife might not perceive I had been weeping; for at this time the devil ſet her on to perſecute me, and ſometimes we would quarrel, yea fight; but, notwithſtanding I was in this ſtate, there were ſeaſons that I preached cloſely to her what I felt, read the Bible to her, and alſo the Prayer Book, though I did not believe ſhe was ſo bad as I was, yet I never could get her to bend the knee to God; but, bleſſed be God for ever, he made uſe of me as an inſtrument to bring her on her knees not many months after, when ſhe found herſelf in as bad a pickle as I was; and then the devil did make a hand of us with a witneſs, for there is nobody but the Lord knows the ſnares,

gins,

gins, and traps he laid for us. Here I a long time laboured under the law, without having the leaſt view of Jeſus Chriſt. The Lord next led me to meditate what Jeſus Chriſt was: my attention at chapel was to hear what was ſaid about Jeſus Chriſt; and where I could find his name in the Bible, I pondered it over, for it ſeemed ſomething new to me: I was led, ſtep by ſtep, to ſee that he came to ſave ſinners; then, thought I, I am a ſinner, but then I am too bad. After much labour here I heard ſomebody ſpeaking about a new birth; I could not make this out at all, thinking we muſt be ſo changed by the Holy Ghoſt as to be perfect in thought, word, and deed. However, one ſummer evening, I went into Moorfields, where a man had been preaching, and, finding two men arguing with each other, I drew near, like a condemned criminal, to hear what they had to ſay, and whether they touched my caſe. One of them obſerved, *If we ſay we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us.* To which the other replied, the words run thus: *If we ſay we have not ſinned, we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us.* Intimating that they had been ſinners, but now freed from ſin in the fleſh; that they which had received the grace of God were perfectly holy. They loaded me pretty well, agreeable to the Lord's words: *They bind heavy burdens on men's ſhoulders, which are grievous to be borne.* Thought I, if it be poſſible for men to arrive at a ſtate of perfection, they certainly muſt be the people,

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and I am far enough from that. Well, I ſtrove hard, prayed oftener, went to chapel oftener, read the Bible oftener, and thought, if this will not do I will give it up, and I declare that I found enmity in my heart all the time I was at it; but ſhortly the Lord would fruſtrate the whole of it. I would fall into ſome ſin, and then I came to my old concluſion, I ſhall be damned after all.

I often ſay, What a peculiar bleſſing it is from God to be placed under a paſtor that can point out the way to a poor entangled creature, but the Lord knows I never met with any that ever ſpoke to my feelings till he placed me under you; for if they did at any time touch upon it, they pulled it all to pieces before they had done. However, the Lord carried on his work, and, after this toiling and fretting, the bleſſed Spirit was pleaſed to open the eyes of my underſtanding to diſcern in ſome meaſure the way of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt, and that he came to ſeek and to ſave ſinners, and I felt myſelf one of the blackeſt caſt; but then it was, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved, and he that believes not ſhall be damned.* And I could not believe that Chriſt would ſave me; I could believe that he would damn me, this I could believe. The common cry among my aſſociates was, Why do you not believe? Only believe, ſay they, and the work is done. Well, I ſtrove to believe, and would with all my ſoul if I could; and when I found I could not, enmity began to work afreſh. After the Lord had diſciplined me here a little,

little, I learnt that faith in Jesus Christ was the gift of God, and that he gave it to a people of his choice; that he had a people formed for himself. The bitterness that worked in my heart at this is beyond expression. Oh! said I, it ought not to be preached! But, blessed be God, it is now my sweetest morsel, when I can feel in my soul his great love from everlasting to me. I laboured here near four years, and then the Lord was pleased to enable me to see more and more of the suitableness of Jesus Christ; that God was holy and I unholy; that justice must have satisfaction on me the sinner, or on Jesus Christ the Surety. I could discern him coming down from heaven in love to his people, taking our nature into union with himself, and dying the just for the unjust, that sinners might, through his satisfaction, come near to God. My prayers were then altered, and my views quite different to what they were; there was a kind of going out after him. It was no use to set me to work then; my cry was, Oh! that I knew him for myself! and there was such a desire stirred up in my soul, that, night and day, my language was, O! that he would but make known his love to me! such longing desires had I after him at that time. For, viewing myself on the brink of hell, I wanted a manifestation of him to me, that I might know whether he had loved me from everlasting; and being assured of this I could believe on him, and love him with all my heart and soul: nothing but this would do; after this I sought, and for this I prayed, indeed it was the whole tenor of my prayers. But

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the Lord appearing to delay his coming, I began to be reluctant, unbelief began to work again, and I came to my old concluſion, I believe it is only a deluſion after all! I have had a little hope for ſome time, but I have been deceiving myſelf; if he had ever loved me, he would let me know it. I cannot look at my well ſpent life, for of ſinners I am the blackeſt; I know I deſerve hell, and he would be juſt in ſending me there: but know where I belong to I muſt, and ſhall never reſt till I do know. Theſe were my meditations. But, bleſs him for evermore, one morning as I was upon my knees at the bedſide—to deſcribe what I felt I cannot; but, what with ſweat and tears, and the agony I was in, I believe my hair ſtood upright on my head while I was praying: in that condition theſe words came to me, like a voice through my ſoul—*Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* I turned myſelf round, as if the Lord had been behind me, and ſaid, "Lord, "what! my ſins that are paſt? I am a ſinner yet." And immediately theſe words were applied to my ſoul—*The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin.* What I felt none can expreſs with the tongue; but, oh! the joy, love, and peace, that flowed into my ſoul! I could hardly believe I was the ſame perſon; I was full of nothing but praiſes and thankſgiving to Jeſus, for I believed aſſuredly then that he loved me from everlaſting, and bore all my ſins in his own body on the tree. This continued promiſe upon promiſe, night and day, ſleeping and waking, my ſoul was with him; yea, I claimed every

promiſe

promiſe in the Bible, I feared nothing, nor cared for nothing but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he was my ſong night and day. The Lord did ſo abundantly bleſs my ſoul at times, that I have told him, though in ignorance, Lord, this is more than ever I aſked for, and more than ever I expected; this is ſufficient, I ſhall doubt no more, for this is beyond all that ever man could expect or deſire. But ſtill the Lord continued it; for I was, I believe, near a twelvemonth in this ſtate: and, bleſs the Lord for ever, he has not left me without a feeling ſenſe of it to this day; for, whenever the Lord the Spirit is pleaſed to lead my views to the atonement, and I can view Jeſus ſuffering for me, my heart is broke; and I cannot help it, whether it be under the word preached, or reading the Bible, or on my knees, or at my work, I am often wondered at. But, to ſee what he has ſaved me from, the vileſt of all wretches living: oh! that I could live more to the honour and glory of his bleſſed name! A little before the Lord was pleaſed to bring me into the trial of that faith he had given me, I had a viſion, which I never ſhall forget while in the fleſh, and I will endeavour, as the Lord ſhall enable me, to deſcribe it.—I went on my knees one morning, according to cuſtom, before I went about my daily employ, and found great nearneſs to the Lord in prayer; but all on a ſudden I was caught away in my mind, forgetting I was on my knees, and viewed myſelf in a bright ſhining cloud that the ſun was ready to ſhine through; I lay

on my ſide in the cloud with my eyes fixed on ſome writing which lay at the bottom of it. At this time I was pleading with the Lord his promiſes; telling him of his promiſed bleſſings, his faithfulneſs, goodneſs, mercy, and love; my eyes were fixed on the writing as if they had been theſe words applied—*Believeſt thou this?* I would break out and ſay, Yes, Lord, I do believe that thou wilt be faithful to all that thou haſt promiſed. I would plead again. The word was the ſame in my mind—*Believeſt thou this?* I ſtill told him I did believe it. This was applied ſeveral times. I was then led to ſee my vileneſs, and this paſſage of ſcripture was brought to my mind—*I am a man of unclean lips; my eyes have ſeen the king, the Lord of Hoſts.* But when I came to myſelf I was in a comical poſture, for my head was turned round on my ſhoulder, and I was very wet, I ſuppoſe with tears; but this did not work a ſlaviſh fear in my heart, for as yet my ſoul was alive to the Lord Jeſus. But I conſidered what it all could mean; and, ſoon after this, the Lord by little and little began to withdraw his comfortable preſence; I could not have communion with him as uſual; I ſought him with all my ſoul, but could not find his comfortable preſence: I then began to find ſuch blaſphemous thoughts, and the corruptions of my heart began to ferment, no God apparently at hand, and unbelief ſtepping in, I began to call all in queſtion, whether the work was of God or not? for this was what I never more expected to find. I then ſat under Mr. W——,

W——, whoſe chapel is in G— ſtreet, Lincoln's-Inn Fields; and, when I could not find the Lord, I ſought to ſome of the eſtabliſhed Chriſtians, as I thought, who belonged to that church. Some told me, if they had experienced the love they had heard me ſpeak of, they ſhould never be in the ſtate I was in: others ſaid, I had forſaken their company, and I certainly muſt keep bad company. I then went to Mr. W——, the miniſter, and he really laughed at me, and ſaid I muſt look to Jeſus. I told him I could not find him; and, ſaid I, if I could but look to him I would not have come to you.

In this ſtate I laboured for I believe near ſix months, and nobody knows what I ſuffered but God and myſelf, except thoſe that have felt the ſame. At times I have found my rebellion ſo ſtirred up, that I have ſecretly wiſhed, as I have gone along the ſtreet, that ſomebody would come and ſtab me, and kill me out of my miſery. I have jumped out of bed in the night when theſe blaſphemous thoughts were hurled through me, gone on my knees, and prayed God, if I was not in the bond of the covenant, never to ſuffer me to get off my knees again, but ſend me to hell, where I deſerved to go; but no anſwer. Sometimes I would get into a private place, go on my knees with humbleneſs of heart, and cry thus—"Lord, decide this matter once more "between Satan and me." I have broke out ſometimes—"I do know the Lord—I am ſure I do." I have argued with the devil an hour or two on a

ſtretch. I have given all up to him of my experience, till I have come to my deliverance, where the Lord ſpoke peace to my ſoul; but I never could give up that, for, bleſſed be the Lord, he kept me, or Satan would have had his ends. Well, I was brought at laſt to this concluſion—Now I will never ſpeak to any perſon more about my experience, for I believe there is nobody in the world knows any thing about it.—"No," ſays the devil, "you was never yet delivered, nor can you find "any one perſon that was delivered from the bon- "dage of the law ever brought into ſuch a ſtate "as you are in." Upon which I thus concluded: Well, if I belong to God, he will keep me from theſe evils; but if not, the devil will have his ends, for I am certain I cannot keep myſelf.

In this forlorn ſtate I went on; ſometimes my heart as hard as a flint, and full of the fury of the devil; at intervals, ſome humblings, that I could in ſome meaſure pour it out to the Lord for a moment; then I was ſhut up again, and as hard as a ſtone. Well, thought I, I ſhall go mourning all my days. But one Sunday morning as I was going to chapel, for I could not keep away, though I was under great temptations to do it, I was meditating on my ſtate: Thought I, is there nobody can ſympathize with me, is there none that can point out my caſe? When theſe words were applied with power to my ſoul—*I will give you paſtors after my own heart, which ſhall feed you with knowledge and underſtanding.* I was perſuaded

in

in my own mind that it came from the Lord, and cried out, "Lord, where are they? I can find none "that know any thing of my experience." Theſe words were fixed on my mind, and I uſed often to ſay, "Lord, where are they?" However, ſoon after I ſaw a man and his wife, whom I had been acquainted with, coming from your chapel in Titchfield-ſtreet; I would have ſhunned them, but they called me; I thought they ſhould get nothing out of me. They aſked me how I got on? I anſwered, Middling! But I believe they ſaw by my countenance where I was, and aſked me why I did not go to hear Mr. Huntington? I replied, I did not know who to hear, nor where to go. They told me where you preached; I anſwered them lightly, but it was greatly impreſſed on my mind all the week; and when Sunday morning came I ſet off and found the chapel. I remember getting into one of the free ſeats, up in one corner, like a thief, that nobody might know me. I do not recollect the text you then preached from; but I heard attentively, which I had not done for ſome time before. I got away as ſoon as you had done, that I might not be ſeen by any one that knew me; for I had heard very evil things ſaid of you, which I ſoon found they could not prove. As I went home meditating on the diſcourſe, I ſaid, "This man ſeems "to know ſomething of what I feel; I will go and "hear him again." When I got home, I ſaid thus to my wife;—I believe the Lord has directed me

to a man that knows ſomething about my diſtreſs, for he ſeemed to ſpeak a little about it. She aſked, Where is it, and who is he? I ſaid his name is Huntington, and it is as far as Oxford Market, and I ſhould go again in the evening; ſhe was in a pet about it, and ſaid, You ſhall not drag me ſo far to hear I do not know who. However I was determined to go; and come I did, bringing her with me; and, bleſſed be the Lord, he never let us go back; he was pleaſed to give me a hearing ear, ſo that I perceived I was not haraſſed with thoſe temptations under the word preached as I had been. I thought for ſome weeks that you preached to none but me, deſcribing my ſtate ſo, that at laſt it all came out; the Lord bleſſed it to my ſoul, I was ſet at liberty again, peace was proclaimed, you was made manifeſt in my conſcience, and I rejoiced again in the light of God's countenance. I bleſſed the Lord, that ever he brought me under your miniſtry, I thanked him night and day; I could then ſee you was the paſtor the Lord had promiſed to give me.

Now began perſecution; but, bleſs the Lord, I have often admired his tender goodneſs in this thing, He would not ſuffer them to ſpeak to me till he was pleaſed to ſpeak peace to my ſoul again: and thoſe of Mr. W———'s chapel not only perſecuted me openly, but imagined lies in their heart; for they told me I left his chapel on purpoſe to live in ſin. Mr. W——— himſelf told me I was got into the

Huntingtonian's

Huntingtonian's eaſy chair, but I ſhould find a difference on a death-bed. I ſent them word, I would meet the church at any time, to prove all they ſaid was falſe; but they never ſent for me, ſo gave me up, watching for my fall: but, bleſſed be the Lord, he has kept me by his mighty power to this day, and has given me to ſee ſome of thoſe that were counted pillars among them turn their back on Jeſus; but I know it is by his grace I am kept to the preſent moment, as one of the vileſt of poor ſinners ſaved. This experience brought me to know God's faithfulneſs to his choſen, for I proved him ſo in that furnace.

Soon after this my love waxed cold, and I began to crave after this world's goods; I thought, if I could get a little beforehand by honeſt induſtry, it was no more than right. I ſet to with a willing mind, as I thought, and not without prayer to God neither. I went in ſearch for ſomething: a chandler's ſhop offered, and money to be lent me to ſet up. My mind was ſet upon it. I went to the Lord, and prayed, if it was not his will, by no means to let me have it; and went to him often too: but I muſt confeſs, though I prayed againſt it if it was not his will, yet my heart was for it; and the Lord, who is the ſearcher of all hearts, knew that I deſired to have it, and he let me have it to my ſorrow; for I ſtrove hard, and meant well, but the Lord's hand went out againſt me in all that I undertook; and I wondered at it, for I did not, as yet,

ſee the ſnare; but experience brings us to a knowledge of theſe things; and I thank my dear Redeemer that ever he brought me in a way of experience, in anywiſe to know the cunning of Satan, and the proneneſs of my own heart to ſtray from the beſt of friends. I went on here, hoping things would be better; but I had loſt my God, there was no communion, things got worſe and worſe; I was in debt and nothing to pay with, in that ſenſe my prayers were ſhut out, no anſwer to my petitions, ſtill all things going againſt us. Sometimes my wife and I would quarrel whoſe fault it was for coming there, for we were both in the meſs; then would we fret one againſt the other: we would pray, but to no purpoſe. And here the Lord kept us till he made us as ſenſibly ſick of it as ever poor creatures were in this world. Then he was pleaſed to humble us in the duſt, and ſhewed us we had backſlidden from him through covetouſneſs and the enſnarement of the riches of this world, for my heart was after it; but his tender love to us would not let us go. Though he kept me cloſe at his dear footſtool a good while, confeſſing and praying for deliverance before it came, and would ſay to my poor ſoul, *Haſt thou not procured theſe things to thyſelf?* Yes, Lord, I would cry, I have, and beg thy pardoning mercy only to forgive thy poor worms, and deliver us out of this place; being ready to ſay, I never would be entangled in this way again: but the Lord knows how weak we are, and I ſee he

will

will let us know it too; for, I believe, in leſs than a twelvemonth I was entangled in the ſame way again. But, after this deliverance, I went comfortably on for ſome time; the Lord bleſſed me under the word often, and many precious promiſes he was pleaſed to give me.

At this time there were three or four friends, as they were pleaſed to ſtile themſelves, came from the Mulberry Gardens chapel to ſpend the afternoon with me, to inquire into my profeſſion, and what doctrines I held ſince I heard Mr. Huntington. They ſeemed greatly to pity me, and aſked a great many queſtions, which the Lord enabled me to anſwer in a meaſure. I inſiſted on the Spirit's work, they upon free will. I told them of God's everlaſting love to his choſen, and being kept by his mighty power. They ſaid I muſt take the law, that is, the ten commandments, as my rule to walk by, though I was called by grace, or elſe I was an Antinomian (the meaning of the word Antinomian I was at this time ignorant of). Upon aſking how I muſt go on in this way? They anſwered, I muſt walk in the footſteps of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as near as I could. I told them, a man was a mere machine, for no longer than he is wrought upon by the Holy Ghoſt can he do aught that is well-pleaſing to God, for it is God muſt work in him to will and to do. This affronted my gueſts, and they perſecuted me ſadly; and one of their confederates wherreted me continually, till I hated her;

ſhe

ſhe uſed to waylay me in the ſtreet as I came home at night from my work, till at laſt I looked to ſee if ſhe was coming, and would have gone a mile out of the way rather than meet her. Theſe words were brought to my mind—*the law worketh wrath.* Ah, Lord! I would cry, there is no love; we cannot unite: but the devil (who is never backward to diſtreſs the poor creature that deſires to be brought on in God's way) ſets in, and would fain have repreſented theſe people to me as taught of God. Well, thought I, if they are right, I muſt be wrong. But, bleſs the Lord, I was enabled to tell him all about it; and he ſoon ſet you to preach on it, and gave me to ſee I was right and they were wrong. However, the Lord was pleaſed to ſpeak very comfortably to my ſoul before he put me into the furnace, and there the Lord ſhewed me what the law was. One day, at my work, he was pleaſed to lead my mind out in meditation about it, from what you preached the Sunday before. The Lord broke in upon my ſoul, and threw ſuch light upon it, that I diſcovered where they all were that contended for the law as a rule for the believer to walk by: I could ſee they were all in bondage under it. And the Lord ſaid to me, "Such like paſtors, ſuch like "people." I thanked him from my ſoul for opening the eyes of my underſtanding to ſee it ſo clearly: my ſoul was ſo full I was obliged to leave my work. I went into the back yard, into my maſter's coal-houſe, and poured out my ſoul to the Lord in

praiſes

praiſes and thankſgiving for his gracious goodneſs; and, while I was praiſing him, theſe words came with power, *Thou ſhalt be call Hephzi-bah, for the Lord delighteth in thee.* I thought I ſhould have dropt down; I cried out, "Lord, what me! the "unworthieſt of all wretches!" But the Lord, the Spirit, turned my mind in a moment to the Lord Jeſus who had atoned for all my ſins. Here I was interrupted by ſomebody coming that way, ſo I left that place and betook me to another, ſhut myſelf up, and prayed the Lord to keep me, telling him of my weakneſs and helpleſſneſs; when theſe words came with power—*May my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if ever I forget thee.* Well, ſaid I, then here is my vow to the Lord, "May my right hand forget its "cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of "my mouth, if ever I forget to praiſe thy holy "name." Which I afterwards aſked the Lord a thouſand pardons for, but it could not be recalled; for I knew it was him alone that muſt work in me to will and to do: but I often think of my vow.

Now my wife had, at this time, got another ſhop, and ſold greens, and ſhe ſeemed to go on proſperouſly; but I would have no hand in this, having had full enough of the other: ſo ſhe had all the management of it herſelf, and was as barren in ſoul as ſhe well could be.

Soon after this the Lord laid me on a ſick-bed; I loſt the uſe of all my limbs, and, what was worſe,

I loſt

I loſt the beſt of friends, the Lord Jeſus: I then murmured and fretted till my old rebellion began to ſhew itſelf; for I can aſſuredly ſay this ſcripture was fulfilled in me at that time—*With the perverſe man I will ſhew myſelf perverſe.* I was in great bodily pain, and had medicines from ſeveral doctors, but all to no purpoſe, for I remained in this condition about a month or five weeks; and then the Lord eaſed me of my pain, and I ſeemed to be ſomewhat better, with which my old man was very much pleaſed; but, bleſſed be the Lord, he would not let me come out that way, for I can ſee it now; but in he throws me again, makes it hotter than it was before, humbled my hard heart under it, and made me willing to ſubmit. Then my dear Redeemer came again, indulged me with ſweet manifeſtations of his everlaſting love to me, making me willing to leave this ſinful world: and, having thus humbled my flinty heart by his power, he healed my body, and ſet me on my legs again. Oh! what pains the Lord takes with ſuch ſinful wretches as we are. The Lord after this ſent us out from that ſhop of dependance, and then my wife was not to eſcape, for he threw her into the ſame way, and kept her there till I had hardly a thing left in the houſe. The Lord's hand ſeemed to go againſt me in all I took in hand; I prayed and cried to the Lord, and often had communion with him, and many precious promiſes too I received. I would watch his hand, expecting deliverance; but no an-

ſwer: yet I would catch at every thing that came in the way. Well, thought I, this is the Lord—this is his way: but no, not yet. And I worked hard at my buſineſs, but all would not do. The Lord kept me here, and my wife ill, expecting every time I came home not to find her alive, till I had hardly the neceſſaries of life. I thought this was hard truſting to God; but, bleſs him for ever, he hath ſince that ſhewed me what it is to truſt in him, for all that I ſtand in need of. My bleſſed Father was obliged to ſcourge me a great deal before he brought down my ſtubborn will to his for temporal neceſſaries: nay, he would not ſo much as let me keep my benefit-club on (that I belonged to before he called me by his grace); I gave it up at laſt with much reluctance: but the Lord was determined I ſhould have no dependance but on him. And a bleſſed life this living upon the Lord is! It keeps our fear in exerciſe, ſo that I fear to offend him that ſupplies all my wants. Bleſs him, I can tell when he hears me too; and I know when I offend, to my ſorrow. I am not without my doubts, fears, and trials, in the way; for I carry about me a body of ſin, which is the heavieſt burden I have to carry: and, in reality, it is a heavy burden to all God's children that are brought to hate ſin. I find it hard fighting againſt the world, ſin, and Satan, when the Lord Jeſus hides his face. I paſs through much perſecution from the world, for I labour among many enemies for my bread. I have many watch-

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ing for my halting; many ſnares, traps, and gins, the devil lays for me; but out of them all the Lord hath delivered me, and I truſt he will yet deliver. He hath made me quite ſick of the world; I long to be with him; there is nothing here that can ſatisfy my ſoul, if the Lord Jeſus is abſent. You, as a paſtor ſent of God, are made a great bleſſing to my ſoul; for often, when I cannot pray for myſelf, I can for you, and ſhall come away ſomewhat ſatisfied that the Lord hath heard me. And may the Lord bleſs you, and keep you, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you for his own name's ſake, through Jeſus Chriſt, and for his dear children's ſake, is the prayer of a poor ſinful worm ſaved.

Your wellwiſher,

and faithful ſon in the faith,

T. S.

LETTER XL.

To Mr. T—— S——.

BELOVED OF GOD,

Peace and truth be with thee.

THY ſimple narrative arrived ſafe, and in the peruſal of it I found a medley of ſweets in it, and a medley of feelings in my own ſoul which accompanied the reading of it. I wondered, I admired, I grieved, I wept, and at times laughed quite out; I ſaid, in my heart, this veſſel hath made many tacks, ſpent much time in ſailing, and for ten years did not run one knot toward the deſired haven, which is ſo commodious to winter in. However, we are glad to find that Jonah is got ſafe to land: you and I, my ſon, are ſubject to many epidemical diſorders which require many bitter potions, and much phyſic. Stiff necks, and ſtony hearts; perverſe wills, and obſtinate minds; the leproſy in the blood, and the plague in the heart—theſe require much probing, and a deal of medicine, and all little enough to reſtore us to health and keep us alive. Thou haſt got a large track to look back upon, plenty

plenty of room for reflection, and a vaſt compaſs of this world to explore; one continued ſcene of preſervation, and the innumerable deliverances of an unknown God, muſt at times be a ſoul-humbling conſideration to thee, and is a confirmation of that wonderful paſſage—*preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus, and called.* However, I will be bold to ſay, that thou haſt been more roughly handled on ſhore than ever thou wert at ſea; no captain, that ever thou ſailedſt with, ever treated thee with that cruelty that thou haſt experienced from the buffetings of thy old maſter the devil; all the laſhes of the *cat* were but fleabites, when compared to the chaſtiſements and ſcourges of God; nor any dangers at ſea ſo perilous as that of hovering upon the brink of the bottomleſs pit, with a guilty conſcience, and under the curſe of God: I know thou wilt agree with me in this. What pains, what patience, what long-ſuffering and long-forbearance, what watchfulneſs and tender care, does the Almighty exerciſe in behalf of poor crawling worms of the duſt, who are ſuch enemies to him, ſuch infamous rebels againſt him! But his decree is ſure, his eternal love is fixt, and the price of our redemption is paid, and we muſt be brought to know it, to feel it, and to enjoy it, that we may be melted, purified, and humbled, and that our God may be glorified.

It is true, had all theſe thy ſufferings been in defence of the goſpel, it had been an honour, and thou wouldeſt have borne, even on thy back, the marks

marks of the Lord Jeſus, but, alas, *thou waſt buffeted for thy faults*; but even this hath worked for good, for we have had our fill of this vain and miſerable world, and, whatever opportunity we may have to return, I believe we ſhall never deſire to go back.

Worldly proſperity is ſeldom a furtherance of the good work within; if it was, God would not keep the generality of his people ſo poor as he does: a ſtate of abſolute dependance on him is beſt for us, though proud nature doth not like to ſubmit to it. It makes us induſtrious, watchful, and furniſhes us with many petitions at the throne of grace; it makes his mercies ſweet, and excites gratitude for the leaſt favour; and, while the Almighty cauſes his goodneſs to paſs before us, we ſee our ſigns, and many tokens for good, which encourage faith, and cauſe us to abound in hope; and, as he hath promiſed us every needful ſupply, and hath put temporal as well as ſpiritual bleſſings into his covenant and in his promiſe, and hath appointed Chriſt heir of all things pertaining to this life and to that which is to come, our portion is ſafeſt in his hand, and he ſhall chooſe our inheritance for us: he hath not intended to give us our good things in this life, he hath provided ſome better thing for us, a treaſure in the heavens, where no moth corrupts, where no thief approaches; therefore, having food and raiment, be therewith content, for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Be not entangled with acquaintances, nor ſuffer thyſelf to be brought into bondage by any one that makes a profeſſion of religion, let him be who he may. There are but few, comparatively ſpeaking, who know either law or goſpel in the power of them; they know neither the goodneſs nor the ſeverity of God; they can neither ſing of mercy nor of judgment. It hath often been a grief to me to ſee a young believer, juſt verged out of darkneſs, running after every one he can find that makes a profeſſion: one robs him, another wounds him, another ſtumbles him. If ſuch were to be ſtill and quiet, keep themſelves to themſelves, and obſerve the Lord's work with them, and what paſſes between their own ſouls and him, pay attention to his voice and watch his viſitations, compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, his word with his work, and give all diligence to make their calling and election ſure, we ſhould not have ſo many halting and doubting believers as we have; but they let the beſt opportunity ſlip, and then the *time comes, when they deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of Man, and they ſhall not ſee it.* Such ſimple ſouls are often enſnared by the worſt of hypocrites, they look up to one who appears to have great light, and they ſee with his eyes, and go by his light, and what he ſays is ſure to be goſpel; another appears to be all faith and fervour, and they reſt upon his arm; by and by this ſhining light falls into error, and the ſuppoſed ſtrong believer diſcovers nothing but raſh preſumption; and then their right

eyes

eyes muſt be plucked out, and their right hands cut off: and how halt and maimed does ſuch a poor ſoul feel himſelf to be; how is he ſtaggered and ſtumbled; how enfeebled and diſcouraged is he, and how ſtrongly do his natural affections bias him. Thus poor David fared when *Ahithophel*, his counſellor and companion, was given up to Satan; and Paul, when *Alexander* and *Demas* turned their backs upon him; but God never forſook them. And truly our fellowſhip is with the Father and the Son Chriſt Jeſus, who will be with us through evil report and good report, and to hoary hairs and old age will he carry us. O that we may walk humbly with him! walk with him in peace and equity, and he ſhall ſhine upon our path, direct our ſteps, and pluck our feet out of every net. There is none like the God of Jeſhuron, who rideth upon the heavens in our help, and in his excellency on the ſkies. The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlaſting arms; he ſhall thruſt out every enemy from before us, and ſhall ſay, Deſtroy them. To his protection I commit thee, and under his ſhadow may thy truſt be, till every calamity be overpaſt. Amen and amen, ſays thy willing ſervant in Chriſt Jeſus,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XLI.

To D—— M——, *New-York.*

Dear brother in the faith, and companion in travail: meekneſs, ſubmiſſion, and reſignation to the will of God, be ever with thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A CHOSEN veſſel, an elected *brother, is born for adverſity*; choſen in the furnace, and ordained to afflictions. *It is given in our behalf, not only to believe in Chriſt, but alſo to ſuffer for his name:* hence we are commanded *to look to him that maketh the ſeven ſtars and Orion, and turneth the ſhadow of death into the morning.* This ſhadow of death very much reſembles the ſubſtance—the ſting of death is ſeverely felt, the miniſtration of death is ſet home upon the heart, the awful ſentence paſſes, and the ſoul ſinks under it, the execution of it is both felt and feared, and the worſt part, the pains of hell and eternal death, are imagined—which are attended with as much terror and torment as if real.

But it is but the *ſhadow*, not the ſubſtance; it is the dark valley, not the bottomleſs pit. The

Spirit

Spirit of life quickens the ſoul, creates a thirſt for Jeſus, dictates prayer, opens the word of truth to the ſoul, and allures it to hope and expectation; all which counteract the terrible artillery of Sinai, and maintain a door of hope, and hope expects a refuge, even under the heavieſt diſcharges of that awful ſtorm. Dreadful are the threatenings of God's profound judgments, and the verdict of the ſinner's own conſcience; but our own heart, when we are even in the horrible pit, will commend the righteouſneſs of God; thus deep calls unto deep—and why is not the juſt ſentence executed? Becauſe a voice before the throne forbids it: it calls upon God for juſtice in the forgiveneſs of ſins, and in cleanſing us from all unrighteouſneſs; and, in the ſinner's conſcience, there is an expectation of a voice that ſpeaks better things than that of Abel, and the poor trembling ſinner eagerly and impatiently waits for it. Yea, though heaven, earth, and hell, appear to combine againſt the ſinner, though all refuge fail, and both heart and fleſh fail, yet this hope in atoning blood banters the devil, weathers the ſtorm, ſurmounts the gloomy regions, reſiſts deſpair, and expects no leſs than the manifeſtation of the ſons of God, and the inheritance with the ſaints in light.

This is the path that God leads his blind ones in, this is the path that they know not; though they know they are in his powerful hand, and he compels them to follow him; though in chains, and with ſupplication and bitter weeping he leads them, look-

ing through the dark cloud at *Him* whom they have pierced, and mourning for him; though aſhamed and confounded at the thought—even of expecting ſuch an undeſerved mercy at the hands of a long-ſlighted, much neglected, and juſtly incenſed God and Saviour. This is ſomething of the appearance, and ſome of the effects of the Saviour's firſt viſit to the heart of a rebel. He comes as the moſt mighty, with his ſword upon his thigh, and rides in his glory and in his majeſty, while the heart of the enemy feels his arrows, and falls under him. *Trembling* attends his firſt approach, *life* works with his arrow, *health* attends his ſword, and *conqueſt* waits on his bow; while truth, meekneſs, and righteouſneſs, are the laſting, or eternal, effects of his victory—*I will bend Judah for me, and fill my bow with Ephraim.*

The veſſel of mercy that makes the deſired haven, muſt know God's path in the mighty waters; he that wins the field in the fight of faith, muſt watch *the ſound of his goings in the tops of the mulberry-trees*; and thoſe who enter the Holy of Holies ſhall firſt learn to know the goings of their God and their King in the ſanctuary. None, my dear brother, teaches like him; his leſſons baffle carnal reaſon, and expoſe the folly of our wiſeſt ſchemes; but when he hath taught us to know our wants, he will teach us to know the banquet that he has provided, and to diſtinguiſh between the *bread* of ſaints and the huſks of hypocrites. Chriſt is anointed and appointed, not to break the

bruiſed

bruiſed reed, nor to quench the ſmoaking flax; not to throw the lambs to the wolf, nor to leave them that are great with young; he is the chief, the faithful, and the good Shepherd, who gave his life for the ſheep, and who received the ſheep as the Father's gift to him, nor ſhall one ſheep of his fold be loſt, or one hoof of his flock be left behind. I have of late, according to cuſtom, had a little furnace-work, to which I have been long in ſeaſoning, and to which I am in ſome degree inured. And ſince that time of trial no ſmall ſhare of Satan's preſence, aid, and aſſiſtance, which he lends to the old man, has fell to my ſhare; and now I am keeping this ſabbath, or day of reſt, at home, laid aſide through a long cold and hoarſeneſs; as a dumb dog that cannot bark, or a dumb man in whoſe mouth are no reproofs; but whether at home or abroad, noiſy or ſilent, I have you in remembrance, and ſubſcribe myſelf ever yours in Chriſt Jeſus,

W. H. S. S.

Church-ſtreet, Paddington.

LETTER XLII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your kind letter, and it gave me ſome comfort. You call me your brother in Chriſt. O! how happy ſhould I be, could I with confidence write to you as ſuch. Yet, Sir, was I to ſay I thought I had no part in him, I ſhould do violence to my own conſcience. The Comforter is far from me, for I am in priſon and cannot come forth; although in this priſon ſometimes light and truth in the word is with me, which encourages hope, I do not feel ſo much terror as formerly, yet Satan does not like to give me up. O, Sir, he is a terrible deceiver! he often inſinuates I am given into his hands to be deceived, which cauſes heavy work within; but I truſt Jeſus will appear, and ſay to the priſoner, Go forth. The Lord works in a myſterious way to our comprehenſion, yet it is all right: who, by ſearching, can find him out? How ſure am I of what you ſay, "His leſſons baffle carnal "reaſon, and expoſe the folly of our wiſeſt ſchemes."

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I am ſure God's judgments are abroad in the earth; O! that he would be pleaſed to grant me an application of the atonement which cauſes a godly ſorrow, and a repentance that needs never to be repented of, that I may be hid in the day of his fierce anger.

You, Sir, know more about me, I believe, than any man living, and I often think mine is a very ſingular caſe; but I know nothing is too hard for the Lord. I am very ſure not one of Chriſt's ſheep ſhall be loſt; no, nor one hoof left behind: not all the art of Satan, nor all his legions combined together, ſhall finally deceive one of his ſheep. I feel myſelf a leper, a miſerable ſinner, in great need of being cleanſed, very much hungering and thirſting after Jeſus, knowing none but he can do me good. O! that he would ſee me again (for I think I have had a diſtant view of him), that my heart may rejoice! I go to no place of worſhip here, for I am in great doubt of all the miniſters that I know; I am more and more convinced that they can beget only their own likeneſs: it was the falſe apoſtles that bewitched the Galatians, and I verily believe the falſe miniſters bewitch all their hearers; little do they ſuppoſe that they receive Satan by the man. This I believe, which cauſes me to ſtay at home, though I am kept wreſtling and pleading night and day, and ſearching the ſcriptures, for which I deſire to thank God. I am in good hopes my wife will be a comfort to me, I think I can ſee ſomething in her

her for good: my converſation leads to the awful end every one muſt make that dies out of Chriſt, and the need of knowing for ourſelves pardon and peace; indeed ſhe herſelf is ſure of it. I am thankful to God you bear me on your mind; if it ſhould be ſo that I can get from this Mount Sinai, I never deſire to come here again. I am at times in very great diſtreſs and heavy affliction; when it is well with me you will ſoon hear of it. The Lord is good to me in providence, and has been pleaſed to take my mind in a great meaſure off from this world.

May the good Lord bleſs you in your family, and crown your labours with ſucceſs, is the ſincere prayer of your affectionate friend

D. M.

New-York.

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

To B——— J———.

As a correſpondent, my dear friend, I am ſomewhat like a horſe that fetches his work, I can only move by fits and ſtarts. Sometimes I have a heart to will, but no time; and again, plenty of time, but no heart. When the matter contained in a letter is preſſed, ſqueezed, and forced, it is but poor dry fare; but when it runs and flows freely, the pen moves with pleaſure, and a little moiſture attends it. Various are the changes and different operations of the Spirit upon an awakened ſinner. Darkneſs, deadneſs, and confuſion, will more or leſs attend him, till the book of God becomes a puzzle, and the ſinner himſelf a riddle; but this ſerves to ſtain the pride of his glory, it proves his wiſdom to be folly, and his knowledge to be conſummate ignorance: hence the paradox, "If any man will be "wiſe, let him become a fool that he may be "wiſe."

God, ſaith the prophet, *goes forth with whirlwinds of the ſouth*; which he did when a mighty wind ſhook

ſhook the houſe where the apoſtles were aſſembled, and they were filled with the Holy Ghoſt; they then went forth and wrought, and the Lord worked with them, confirming their word with ſigns. This wind does all the execution on the hearts of poor ſinners to this day.

The voice ſaid, Cry: What ſhall I cry?—That all fleſh is graſs, and all the glory thereof as the flower of graſs; the graſs *withereth*, the flower *fadeth*, becauſe *the Spirit of God bloweth upon it.* Under this operation all our glorying in our own ſtrength, valour, wiſdom, knowledge, pleaſure, carnal delights, withers: we cannot flouriſh, thrive, grow, or appear alive to any of theſe things—convictions, guilt, ſhame, fear, torment, and a dread of damnation, makes us ſick of ſuch entertainments. When ſin was dead, and we alive without the law, theſe things were our glory; but now ſin is revived, and we are dead, and cannot feed upon fooliſhneſs, nor fill our belly with the eaſt wind any longer.

Prophecy, ſon of man, to the wind, that the wind may blow upon theſe dry bones, that they may live. This gale makes us feel ourſelves ſick, ſore, tender, poor, and needy; we hunger, thirſt, long, deſire, crave, cry, confeſs, pray, ſeek, ſearch, watch, hope, expect, and catch at every thing heard, ſeen, felt, or found, that will give us the leaſt encouragement. But unbelief, hardneſs of heart, rebellion, enmity, Satan's aſſaults, fear and torment, ſhame

and

and confuſion, all militate againſt the poor ſoul in this labour and travail.

The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; ſo is every one born of the Spirit. When this myſtical birth is to be produced, the clouds of divine diſpleaſure begin to diſperſe, the diſmal gloom, terrors, and horrors, begin to ſubſide, the old veil of darkneſs, blindneſs, confuſion, and ignorance, diſappear; the ſtorms of Sinai ceaſe to roll, and divine vengeance ceaſes to lower, the dark regions of the ſhadow of death vaniſh and appear more remote, the gates of hell cloſed, the darts of Satan are more broken, blunt, and leſs piercing; our thoughts all aſſemble and hover over Jeſus, the heart enlarges, hope riſes, faith moves towards him and embraces him, when love by the Spirit flows in, when fear and torment flee out.

So is every one that is born of the Spirit.—Now faith, hope, love, joy, peace, patience, meekneſs, gentleneſs, goodneſs, temperance, all ſhew themſelves as ſo many jewels to deck the ſoul, which, with the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, together with the beſt robe, makes the poor ſinner a perfection of beauty; but after a few months of this feaſting and banquetting comes the *furnace* to try every grace, and eſpecially that of faith. Here Chriſt withdraws, heaven frowns, Providence runs counter to the promiſe; corruptions move, Satan comes, fear riſes, prayer flags, the breaſts of conſo-

lation

lation dry up, and the ſanctuary yields no refreſhing; jealouſy, ſuſpicions, and evil ſurmiſings, begin to work, fretfulneſs, peeviſhneſs, murmurings, and complainings are both felt and feared; we ſtruggle, ſeek, knock, call, watch, feel, hunt, look, and long, but nothing comes. Then we begin to ſeek for a morſel of the old fare, and the devil then ſhews us all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them; luſt, beauty, pleaſure, profit, mirth—and the delights of the ſons of men, ſuch as muſical inſtruments, and that of all ſorts: and now we call the proud happy, and the ſervice of God weariſome; when another unexpected gale ariſes.

Awake, O north wind, and come, thou ſouth; blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits. The firſt motion is attended with ſome terrors, fear, and trembling; this drives us with ſome fervour and earneſtneſs to God in prayer: the heart ſoon relents, melts, and moves, with love toward him: the work is revived; his faithfulneſs appears; truth, kindneſs, and love, ſeem firm, immutable, and everlaſting; himſelf ſhines more ſweetly and precious, his work appears more plain, faith more ſtrong, hope abounds, and love is more abundant. Now let my beloved come, and eat his pleaſant fruits; let him regale himſelf with the exerciſe of that grace which he hath planted in my ſoul. It was this heavenly wind which ſhook all corruption, ſin, and mortality out of the body of Elijah—*he*

went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Watch the motions and operations of these cooling and comforting breezes; for it is under their operations that faith and affections, desires and prayers, will flow out. Whether our old friend is on Windmill Hill, or in Ninfield Stocks, I know not; but I reckon he is in the latter. Pray tender my kind respects to your father and mother, and, should the Lord permit, I hope to see them as soon as the weather will admit, such an Hebrew as I am, to come forth out of my hole: as yet I must abide, as a bottle in the smoke. Pray, my dear friend, take heed not to give offence to my true yoke-fellow, my companion in travail, who is so profitable both to thee and to me—I mean *conscience*; for his praise is in all the churches; he is next to the Spirit, the third in office from the King of kings; a magistrate that will ever punish an evil doer, but will ever praise them that do well. The Lord be with thee, bless thee, and keep thee, is the prayer of,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XLIV.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,

I THANK you, from my very heart, for your kind and affectionate letter; it came to me under the *unction* of the bleſſed *Spirit* of *God*, and was truly made a bleſſing to my ſoul: all that I can do is to acknowledge myſelf your debtor, and may the Lord return an hundred-fold into your boſom for this kindneſs ſhewn to one of the weakeſt and moſt unworthy of the lambs of his flock. It rejoiced my heart to hear that it had pleaſed the Lord to reſtore you again to your labour.

You ſay, in your letter, that the faith which the Lord has been pleaſed to work in my heart will ſhortly work by love, and caſt out all fear and torment; I feel my want of it, and nothing ſhort of *union* with the dear *Redeemer*, who is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, and the altogether lovely, can ſatisfy my ſoul. At preſent I have but little of the joy of faith, but the Lord gives me to poſſeſs a

ſweet

ſweet confidence in my ſoul, that he will never leave me till he has done *all* that he has *ſpoken to me of*. Never did he before take ſuch a ſtubborn rebel in his hand. O the depth of electing love! I tried to get from under his hand; but he ſtill held me faſt. Viewing him as a ſovereign God; as being juſt in damning me, raiſed in my heart ſuch rebellion, that I felt as if I could have *** from his throne. What infinite mercy that Chriſt received gifts for the *rebellious!* If he had not, *mercy* never could have reached *me*. It was a ſharp conflict at the laſt; I felt myſelf juſt dropping into hell, and was then brought to know this, that it all depended on *one ſingle act* of *his ſovereign will*, whether to *ſave* or *damn me*: but I lay not long in this place, ere the Lord appeared for me, and wrought faith in my heart to believe in him.

I was in the ſharpeſt conflict when I received your firſt letter; indeed I was in ſuch a ſituation, that I could not have read it if you had given me a thouſand worlds, and was almoſt induced to throw it on the ground; but dear M—— S—— took it from me, and read it to me. Pardon my freedom, dear Sir, I cannot help being open with you, and telling you what my God has done; I cannot do ſo to every one; and ſhould I ever be favoured with your company in this world, I ſhall tell you more than I ſhall ever write. I pray you ever to remember me before the Lord: I feel

myſelf a creature full of wants; I am ſo empty, that I want all that God has to beſtow, that I may be filled with all his fulneſs, that I may riſe up to the fulneſs of the meaſure of the ſtature of Chriſt.

And now, my dear friend, I ſhould be glad to hear from you as often as you believe you have a word from the Lord to ſend, not regarding times and ſeaſons, and believe every favour will be cordially received by,

Your ſincere friend in the goſpel of Chriſt,

R. M.

LETTER XLV.

To Mr. R—— M——.

THE Shunamite is come again, and it ſeems to be well with her. The next of kin hath married the widow, and raiſed up the name of the dead upon the inheritance; redeemed the mortgaged property, and done every thing that can be required or expected of a brother in Iſrael. She forgets the ſhame of her youth, and remembers the reproach of her widowhood no more; her Maker is her huſband, the Lord of Hoſts is his name. She now ſets to her ſeal that God is true—a father of the fatherleſs, and a huſband of the widow, is God in his holy habitation. No deſerted, divorced, deſolate ſoul in a ſtate of widowhood and ſolitude, bemoaning and bewailing its barrenneſs, its deſolation, and forlorn eſtate, ſhall ever find this brother, this kinſman in Iſrael, refuſe to do the kinſman's part; nor ſhall his houſe ever be called, *the houſe of him that hath his ſhoe looſed.* He did worthily in Ephratah, in the days of his fleſh; and his name was famous in Bethlehem, where he was brought up. But that patient, ſubmiſſive, and humble act of throwing my letter on

the ground, well becomes a good wife, whoſe deſires are to be to her huſband, and who is to rule over her. This conſequential and tyrannical behaviour will cauſe thee in future many a ſpiritual deſertion, many a night's lodging alone, many a bitter ſigh and ſilent ſob, many weeping hours and blubbered cheeks; for he will rule over thee be as ſtubborn as thou wilt: he will provoke thee to jealouſy till thy fleſh will crawl on thy bones; he will paſs by thee, and take no notice of thee, but *go down to the beds of ſpices*—to the more ſimple, humble, ſavory, and unctious ſouls: this will break thy proud ſpirit, and ſoften thy ſtout heart, and make thy ſoul more mild, meek, ſympathetic, and tender—which will teach thee to ſubmit to his frowns, and more highly to prize his preſence, till thou art willing to put thy mouth in the duſt, to obtain a hope in his mercy. That old man of thine will procure thee many a broken bone, and the more he is countenanced, the more will thy conduct be reſented; but I ſpare thee: however at ſome future period thou wilt remember me, and, inſtead of ſaying in thy haſte that all men are liars, thou wilt confeſs that this prophecy is true. Stubbornneſs and pride call for furnace work; contention calls for ſtripes; peeviſhneſs calls for deſertion; and a haſty ſpirit for a long and lingering croſs: and it is well for ſuch as you and I, that he hath proclaimed his name long-ſuffering, ſlow to anger, and abundant in goodneſs and truth; or elſe we might juſtly expect the fate of Korah, Dathan, and

and Abiram. But we are in the rock, in the ſecret place of the Moſt High, and therefore muſt abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty. O bleſſed hiding-place, bleſſed refuge, bleſſed covert from the ſtorm and tempeſt! No ſword lays at us here, no arrow enters our reins, no billow rolls over our heads here; no ſtorm nor hurricane, no ſnares of fire, brimſtone, or an horrible tempeſt, ſhall ever be the portion of our cup. The Lord hath ſhut us in; he covers us with his feathers, under his wings we ſhall truſt, and truth ſhall be our ſhield and buckler; the rainbow of the covenant encompaſſes the head of our faithful and true witneſs, and our neſt is made in the heart of his everlaſting love—nor ſhall height or depth, life or death, things preſent or things to come, ever ſeparate us from the love of our heavenly Father diſplayed in the Son of his love. What is all the religion in the world ſhort of this? Only a name to live! A ſhew, a web, the ſkin of a ſheep. I am glad that my God hath unmaſked thee, undeceived thee, uncaſed thy carnally ſecure heart—and ſhewn thee what better preaching can do, and how their work ſtands when it comes to be tried with fire. Where is all the wood, hay, ſtubble? What is become of the daubing, and the cry of Peace! Peace! the healing that was applied by them to thy wounds, and the ſmooth things which they propheſied? Nothing of all this armour was ſufficient to repel, or ward off, the curſes of a broken law, or the wrath of God. And how do

ſuch labourers appear in thine eyes now? As Satan's beſt friends, and ſinners' worſt enemies—the hypocrite's ſhining light, and the ſaint's wandering ſtar. But thine eyes ſee thy teachers: they that ſat in darkneſs ſhew themſelves—and may ſhe ever walk in the light, as he is in the light. Amen.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XLVI.

To the Rev. Mr. J——.

DEAR SIR,

As you have known my ſoul in adverſity, I think it is my duty to give you ſome of the Lord's dealings which have lately paſſed upon my ſoul. You know, Sir, that I have been for a long time much diſtreſſed about my dubious ſtate. Your preaching has tried me, and ſtripped me of all my ſuppoſed goodneſs, God knows; but it made me as rebellious as a devil. I got ſo wearied with my diſtreſs that my very life was a burden to me, and yet I was afraid of death. I have at times had ſuch awful views of the tremendous judgments of God,

God, which has ſunk me ſo low, that I concluded I muſt give up all hope in him, and claim on him. But to ſay, *let him haſten his work*, will never do; *for he is of one mind, and who can turn him?* O! bleſſed be God for a faithful preacher, who would not ſuffer my ſoul to remain plaſtered up in a falſe peace. When you preached from the troubles of Hezekiah, much comfort flowed in; you touched my caſe, and I found the diſcourſe to be the life of my ſpirit. I had ſuch joy and peace in believing that I cannot deſcribe; I felt myſelf ſo humbled under a ſenſe of my own unworthineſs, that I was aſhamed even to look up; until I felt a power greater than ever I had felt before, which made me cry out, *My Lord, and my God.* I believe, Sir, that this is ſome of the wine and oil which you ſo often treat of; for it rejoiced my heart, and I quite loſt all my burden for ſome time. But, alas! before ever I was aware, I loſt all my joy; and never, ſure, did my ſoul mourn after any thing in this world, as after that ſecret ſomething which I had loſt. And this continued until I heard you preach from that myſterious text in Eccleſiaſtes. As ſoon as you gave out the words, my mind fled to the dear Redeemer, and you deſcribed my feelings in that diſcourſe ſo clearly, that I had no doubt but the Lord was leading me by his Spirit into all truth. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, for his goodneſs and mercy to me who am ſo unworthy of it. God is confirming the word

of his ſervant, and I can clearly ſee, my dear Sir, that you have not laboured in vain.

When W. H. preached out of Iſaiah xlii. I believe no poor ſinner ever had ſo much of his experience turned up as I had. The croſſes, roughs, and crooks, were made plain as faſt as that man of God delivered his diſcourſe. I received it, and I found it all written on the tables of my heart: and things which I had entirely forgotten were brought afreſh to my mind; and my heart ſaid, *Come, and ſee a man that hath told me all that ever I did.* I am ſure the Lord ſent him to confirm his good work upon my ſoul; for I am ſure if he had not the Spirit of God upon him, he could never have ſearched my heart as he did; and had I not had the Spirit, I ſhould never have had ſuch a light caſt upon my ſtate, and upon the way that I have come. I heard as though there were no other perſon to hear; and I thought within myſelf, ſo we go on, from heart to heart. O, my dear Sir, this is ſweet work! for, indeed, I found ſuch enlargement of ſoul as I cannot expreſs. I thought I was fixed firm on the Rock; ſurely, ſaid I, there will be no more doubting on my mind about my ſtate. I ſeemed to have nothing to do but to bleſs and praiſe God for his wonderful love to ſuch a poor ſinner, who had formerly boaſted of great things, and yet knew nothing of the way of ſalvation in the experience and power of it, only by the letter of ſcripture. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul;

and

and all that is within me bleſs his holy name! Being rather infirm, I am much troubled to write; but having a deſire to acquaint you of the Lord's goodneſs to me, I preſume, being fully perſuaded that your goodneſs will excuſe all my imperfections. And may the beſt of bleſſings reſt upon your own ſoul, and on your labours, is the earneſt prayer and deſire of,

Dear Sir,

Affectionately yours,

H. T.

LETTER XLVII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I HAVE taken the liberty of writing a few ſimple things to you concerning my ſoul, having had a deſire to do it for between four and five years. I wrote one letter to ſend to you, Sir, about four years ago, but being all that time in great diſtreſs, I was

I was afraid to ſend it; for Satan told me that I was a hypocrite, and I thought ſo too; and if you, Sir, ſhould have, in your anſwer to me, one ſingle doubt of my ſtate, I ſhould have utterly ſunk in deſpair. About four or five years ago, I had my profeſſion torn up by the roots by Mr. J——; and I now thank the Lord for it.

For the two firſt years I was in great horror of ſoul, for I had made a profeſſion of religion for ſome time, ſuch a one as it was, and the Lord, by Mr. J———'s preaching, ſhewed me where I ſtood, and dreadful work it made; for, inſtead of love to God, which I once thought I had, I found ſuch dreadful hatred to him and his word, and to Mr. J———'s preaching, that I thought I ſhould go to hell in my rebellion, with my eyes open; and Satan filled me with bitter blaſphemies againſt God himſelf, and ſuch an hatred to Mr. J———, that I wiſhed ſome judgment to fall on him, and take him out of the world; for I thought he had a ſpite againſt me, and preached on purpoſe to diſtreſs me: and I uſed to think he preached more diſtreſſing to me than he did to any of the reſt. One night I heard him at E———r, and I thought I would not be diſtreſt let him preach how he would; but, O Sir! I felt as if I was ſure of going to endleſs miſery; and I expreſſed theſe words to a friend when I came out, that I was as ſure of being damned as I was alive, if Mr. J——'s preaching was true. But now, Sir, theſe are not my thoughts, for I think the Lord did

all

all for the good of my ſoul; for even in that tempeſt I have found, at ſeaſons, a ſtrong confidence that the Lord would bring me through, after he had ſufficiently humbled me. But, after two years, as near as I can remember, this great diſtreſs of ſoul abated, inſomuch that I did not feel the keenneſs of it to that degree I had done: but I found myſelf in a worſe ſtate, for I ſunk into a dark, lifeleſs, and dead frame of ſoul. And, O Sir! though I knew at the ſame time that living and dying ſo I muſt periſh, yet lightneſs of ſpirit, and hardneſs of heart, that could not relent, beſet me, and yet I uſed to mourn and grieve at my hard fate, for I could ſee no ground for hope; for when I went on my knees to try to pray, I could ſcarce get a word from my mouth, much leſs from my heart; and then I uſed to neglect it, for I thought I ſhould never be heard; then gloomy dejections overwhelmed me, for I found no faith to believe that I ever ſhould be heard; but when I did neglect prayer, conſcience would ſo condemn me, that at times I was almoſt diſtracted. There are two things which have diſtreſt me not a little: the one is, when I was under ſuch horror of ſoul I could not endure to read any book that was alarming; for when I did, Sir, I found ſuch dreadful malice againſt it, that I could have thrown it into the fire, or have torn it in a thouſand pieces. And can you believe it, that after theſe horrors wore off, I have had leſs ground for hope than I had in the midſt of the ſtorm; for when

when I read in that lifeleſs ſtate, I have been ſo confuſed that I have been forced to read one thing over two or three times before I could tell the meaning of it; and had ſuch a natural diſlike to it, that grieved me more than all my diſtreſs. I have been, Sir, juſt like a child that hated his book, and wanted whipping to it; and as I could find no perſon that had been exerciſed with theſe things, I concluded it was ſingular, and was ready to give up all hopes of ever coming forth, till within a few months back, when I begged of God to deliver me from this dreadful lifeleſs ſtate; and, bleſſed be his glorious name, he has done it; for I found my doubts and fears removed a little under Mr. J——— the ſabbath-day before you preached at L—— laſt; but, O Sir! when you preached your laſt ſermon on Thurſay evening, a day much to be remembered by me: oh, my dear Sir! I could ſee eye to eye with you, for I could ſee *that it was God that had caſt me down, and not man*; for I felt a lively hope, and a ſtrong perſuaſion that the Lord would bring me through, for my doubts and fears were all removed, and a great calm came into my ſoul, and my conſcience left off to accuſe me, and I have felt God's bleſſed Spirit ſpeaking to me ever ſince. This day I heard that dear man of God, Mr. J——, and the beſt diſcourſe to me that ever I heard from his mouth, for the Lord ſhined ſweetly into my heart: I could not help ſaying, *My Lord, and my Saviour.* Oh, Sir! I could write ten times more,

was

was my paper larger. And now, Sir, I beg an anſwer as ſoon as it ſuits you, for I ſhall wait with impatience. So farewell, dear Sir; and may God bleſs you, is the prayer of,

S. Y.

P. S. I make no doubt but you will laugh at my long ſcrawl.

LETTER XLVIII.

To S—— Y——;

DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST JESUS,

THY ſimple epiſtle came ſafe to me, and I thank my God for his kindneſs to thee. Wonderful, various, and intricate, are the ways and works of God with poor ſinners; and we are too blind and ignorant to make them out, until the Comforter comes to teſtify of Chriſt to us, to lead us into all truth, and to glorify Jeſus in the diſcoveries of his dying love, and in his great ſalvation made known to our ſouls; then the bleſſed Spirit, who ſearches the deep things

things of God, ſearches out the deep things of our hearts, and ſhews us the way we have come, and what he hath been doing within; the hand of God upon us, and the bleſſed end that God had in view, namely, to make us feel the need of a precious Chriſt; and that he might lead us to him, and reveal him in us, even when there is no eye to pity, no hand to help.

Light and life have entered into thy heart, my daughter; the Sun is riſen upon thee, and the promiſed healing in his beams hath been communicated to thee: the Lord is thine everlaſting light, and thy God thy glory. O! what debtors are ſuch poor, blind, rebellious ſouls as we to the God of all grace, mercy, and peace! who ſaves the chiefeſt of all ſinners, owns and gives teſtimony to the word of his grace by the mouth of the moſt deſpicable of all inſtruments, and pours out his Spirit even upon ſervants and upon handmaids; but his own ſheep muſt know their own ſhepherd, they muſt hear his voice and live. All that ever came to thy heart before him, were thieves and robbers; friends to Satan, rivals to the Son of God, debauchers of the Lord's bride, and ſecret enemies to the bridegroom: they eſpouſe ſouls to themſelves, and zealouſly affect them, that they may exclude their affections from Chriſt; they had dreſt thee up in a ſheep's ſkin, in order to betray thee into the hand of Satan, that thou mighteſt be damned as an hypocrite in Zion. Mr. Jenkins has acted the honeſt and faithful part, as a real friend

of

of the Bridegroom ſhould do: he has plucked off thy well-ſet hair, thy curious girdle, thy ſtomacher, thy beautiful ornaments, the ornaments of thy legs, the wimples, criſping-pins, and noſe jewels, and has ſent thee in thy true colours to the Heir of all things, to the Moſt High God, poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, that he may diſplay the riches of his grace in thee, and draw all the affections of thy heart and ſoul to himſelf; and he that ſeeks the honour of him that ſent him, and not his own, is a true and faithful ſervant of the King of kings and Lord of lords. I bleſs my God that he hath raiſed me up ſo faithful a fellow-ſervant, and that he ſhould condeſcend to own and honour him in the glorious work; and may the Lord make thee an ornament to his cauſe, a living ſtone in his building, an honour to Zion, and a crown of joy and rejoicing to the paſtor that God hath ſet over thee, is the prayer and deſire of,

Dear ſiſter,

Thy faithful and affectionate

brother in Chriſt Jeſus,

Church-ſtreet,
Paddington.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER XLIX.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MANY and ſincere thanks to my moſt beloved friend for his epiſtle, which I received this morning; fraught with power, light, wiſdom, knowledge, love, experience, truth, and condeſcenſion to them of low degree. How powerful and ſavory I found it! Indeed it is ſuch as this my ſoul loveth. How much does ſuch as this differ from the noiſy, flimſy, and flouriſhing harangues of the day! O, my father, you know there are but few in the ſecret; and I am ſure of it. The myſtery is hid from them: but it is revealed unto babes; and out of their mouths hath the Saviour ordained ſtrength, that he might perfect praiſe, and ſtill the enemy and the avenger. I find no fault in this letter, except that you are too haſty in your expectation of me. I believe, and that from my heart, that what you ſay in it is the truth; I ſee it clear enough, and it agrees exactly with what I have, in ſome meaſure, felt.

There is nothing in this world that rejoices my heart ſo much as to ſee the Redeemer triumphing, and the people falling under him; this does indeed

afford freſh matter for the pulpit, and matter for thanks, gratitude, and love to him. This has ſo melted and humbled me, that I have abaſed myſelf, and have been ſo aſhamed, confounded, and confuſed before him, to think that he ſhould condeſcend ſo low as to uſe ſuch a vile, baſe, and nothing-worth inſtrument to convey the knowledge of himſelf to the ſouls of any of his children. And, indeed, it is the wonder of all wonders, and it makes me often ſtand aſtoniſhed at it, and can hardly credit ſuch a thing. I have had ſome comfortable days of late, a very pleaſant frame, and led in a ſweet channel, with rays of light on the word and on my path; but, alas! alas! it is departed. It wore off by degrees, and I am left with all my old companions about me; fretfulneſs, rebellion, contention, and all evils. It really is ſhocking to relate it, but I know to whom I ſpeak, that I have contended with the Almighty face to face, and have told him to kill me outright; that it would be better, than plaguing me ſo, to make an end of me at once; and that, of all that I knew in the world, none fared worſe than thoſe who wiſhed to ſerve him beſt, and thoſe who were faithful and diligent for him to the utmoſt of their power; that theſe were always burdened, oppreſſed, ſlighted, mocked, and diſregarded, whilſt he honoured and rewarded thoſe whom he knew degraded and debaſed him, perverted his word, and marred the paths of his children, and betrayed them, as far as in their power lay, into the hands of

the devil himſelf. I know he is long-ſuffering, or elſe he would never bear with me. But is it not hard to ſee vile and baſe-born ſlaves honoured for telling lies, while others are hated for telling the truth? I believe nothing in this world is ſo much hated and oppoſed as truth and conſcience; and thoſe that hold both are moſt ſlighted. This makes me wiſh that I was in ſome wilderneſs. But, oh! let them call them by what names they pleaſe, they ſhall find them beyond the grave. You have ſurely ſaid the truth, and I ſet my ſeal to it.

I wrote the above on Saturday. This is Sunday afternoon; I am going immediately to Mr. B——'s houſe to preach to-night, and leave the L—— people to live on their wiſdom. To-morrow we ſet off, and get to Providence at night. I ſhall ſend this to Mr. B——'s, leſt you come out before the poſt.

J. J.

LETTER L.

To the Rev. J —— J——.

BELOVED OF GOD,

THOU haſt refreſhed my bowels in the Lord. He who comforteth thoſe that are caſt down, comforted me by the coming of Titus. The contents are good news from a far country. God hath viſited and redeemed his people. I fell more than once or twice on my knees, with many tears of thankfulneſs and joy. Satan hath a captive loſt, and Chriſt a ſubject born. There hath been joy (this week) in heaven among the angels of God, over that poor ſinner that now repenteth. I told her when ſhe opened her caſe to me, that ſhe would not die in the pit; I added, "as thou liveſt, I ſhall ſee thee "in the kingdom of heaven." My boaſting before thee is found a truth. God hath confirmed the word of his ſervant, and performed the counſel of his meſſenger, and hath made thee the happy inſtrument. Thou art now a midwife and a nurſe, if not a father, in Iſrael. Go on, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. It is not thundering hell and damnation that do the execution, my

dear ſon. The powerful, life-giving, and all-conquering voice that brings the ſinner from death to life, is the voice of the Son of God; it is a voice that is not lift up, nor is it heard in the ſtreet; it is the ſmall ſtill voice that ſilences all the noiſe of the earthquake, the wind, and the fire; it is the voice of the Advocate in the ſinner's conſcience, ſaying, Looſe him, and let him go. No ſoul hears this voice but the poor ſinner in whoſe heart it ſpeaks; God in this way gives teſtimony to the word of his grace; and the more pure the goſpel, the more will the power of God attend it. They that honour me I will honour; and to preach the pure goſpel, and declare his whole counſel faithfully, is ſpreading the ſavour of his name; and God will make ſuch a ſweet ſavour unto himſelf, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. The children are certainly come to the birth, and there is not ſtrength to bring forth. But as it hath pleaſed God, by the laſt viſit of his poor unworthy ſervant, to put a little of the ſpirit of life both in the cherub and in the wheels, ſo that the living creature, and the chariot of his willing people, begin to move in conſort, ſhould matters begin to deaden or get flat, and the ſhaking among the dry bones begin to go off, and the preſent ruſhing of the mighty wind ſubſide; if any thing like Paul's dream ſhould appear, ſaying, Come over into Macedonia and help us; I will, if God incline and permit, come again, that you may have a ſecond benefit. Behold I ſhew you a myſtery, which will much

much puzzle and perplex thee in thy preſent work of proclaiming liberty; Doſt thou know that the ſpiritual birth of every ſoul that is brought forth under thee will be attended with previous labour and travail in thine own ſoul; and, if their deliverance ſhould not be attended with godly ſorrow and repentance, ſelf-loathing, pardon of ſin, and thoſe eſſential things that accompany ſalvation, that thou wilt travail again and again in birth till Chriſt be formed in them? When this comes on thee thou wilt wonder, and think ſome ſtrange thing hath happened unto thee; but ſo thou wilt find it. About twenty-two years ago this puzzled me not a little. No preachers know any thing of this, but thoſe who are in the ſpiritual bonds of the goſpel, and whom God owns in begetting others in thoſe bonds. I have been ſo much accuſtomed to this exerciſe, as to be enabled nearly to tell what is going on in the church, by the operations of the Spirit on my own ſoul; but the Lord will reveal even this unto thee.

God bleſs thee,

Feb. 16, 1797.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LI.

To the Rev. J. J———.

God brings down, and lifts up, my dear friend; he wounds, and his hands make whole. I believe that this preſent complaint will be one of the beſt, yea, the very beſt, that ever befell thee. A very preſent help is my God in times of trouble; when their ſtrength is all gone he will appear, and to them that have no might he will increaſe ſtrength; nor ſhall all the devils in hell, nor all the infernal infidelity of thy heart, ever make my God unfaithful to his word, or God's poor ſervant a liar to thee. J—— ſhall ſee that juſt One, and hear words from the life-giving voice of the only begotten Son of God. Thou ſhalt not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; thou ſhalt not ſow, and another reap; thou ſhalt not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my ſervants, and they ſhall long enjoy the work of their hands. Thou ſhalt ſhortly know what almighty power can effect, and what eternal love can perform. Thou waſt born to make full proof and trial of the foundation that God hath laid in Zion; God hath founded that city, and thou art one of the poor of his people that ſhall truſt in it;

nor

nor ſhalt thou ever be moved, the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh thee. Thou haſt acknowledged me already in part, and thou ſhalt acknowledge me to the end; and even in this alſo, his ſalvation is near to them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land, and it is now even at thy door. The Lord hath long ſtood and knocked there in the way of reproof and rebuke, and thou haſt heard his voice; and earneſt deſires after him, a deep ſenſe of the need of him, and earneſt expectations and longings for him, have opened the door; and into ſuch he hath promiſed to go, and with ſuch to ſup, and ſuch ſhall ſup with him; and thou ſhalt have a taſte of that ſweet banquet even in reading this epiſtle, for I know who dictated it, and who ſends it to thee; and therefore hear thou what the Spirit ſaith to thee, and be not rebellious, be not faithleſs, but believing; nor turn a deaf ear to him that ſpeaketh to thee from heaven. Truth is the girdle of our divine Prophet; faithfulneſs girds him as a prieſt, and righteouſneſs girds him as a king; and all this ſhall be diſcovered when he manifeſts himſelf to thee; for he ſhall ſatiate the weary, and repleniſh the ſorrowful ſoul; he will not contend for ever, nor will he be always wroth, leſt the Spirit fail from before him, and the ſouls that he hath made. It is for thine iniquity that he hath ſmote thee and hid himſelf, and thou haſt gone on frowardly in rebellion, murmuring, and giving way to, yea, in encouraging unbelief; but he hath ſeen thy ways, and will heal thee. The work of

Jeremiah and Ezekiel was chiefly that of ſounding an alarm, of awakening the dead, and, as perſonating God, they came near to ſinners' hearts in judgment; as it is written, *Wilt thou judge them, Son of Man? Wilt thou judge them?* and again, *I have ſet thee for a tower and a fortreſs among my people, that thou mayeſt know and try their ways.* Jer. vi. 27. And you know that the New Teſtament hath its ſons of thunder as well as ſons of lightning: ſome to ſound an alarm, others to gather the aſſemblies; ſome to remove, and others to water; ſome to root up, and others to plant; ſome to wound, and ſome to heal; ſome to ſtrip, and others to clothe; ſome to condemn, and ſome to juſtify; ſome to bring down, and ſome to lift up. But whether I work at the dung-gate, or ſquare the ſtones; whether I carry the hod, or handle the trowel; whether I uſe the plummet, or bring the ſtones, matters not, if we are but building in the temple of the Lord, and ſeeking his honour, and not our own. This is the main point; and the pure, unadulterated, and uncorrupted language of all the builders muſt be—not ſelf—but grace, grace unto it.

God bleſs thee. Ever thine,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY EVER BELOVED FRIEND,

YOUR epiſtle is now before me. God Almighty bleſs you and reward you. How could you tell what effect it would have upon me, and that I ſhould have a foretaſte of the heavenly banquet in reading it? But, as the Lord liveth, it is true. I have read it over with thouſands of tears, and ſecretly bleſſed God in my ſoul for it, and ſtill hope for his great ſalvation. I can feel that your epiſtle meets with acceptance in my very conſcience, and draws and encourages my heart to look out, and paſſionately to long for, his coming. If I could ſee his bleſſed face but once, I think I ſhould aſk for no more in this world. He knows that he has crucified me to all but himſelf; and if he denies me the favour of his preſence, I muſt remain in my love-ſickneſs, deſpair, and die in it. Thine epiſtle I know is the word of his ſervant, and the counſel of his meſſenger; yea, a ſervant whoſe word I have always found to be true, and I declare that it almoſt puts unbelief itſelf to ſilence; but it is a hard matter to arm ſo cloſe as

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to repel the attacks of Satan and unbelief. O! that I were free from theſe! But there is one thing in your letter that neither of them object to, nor dare they, for I am too well grounded in that to be ſhaken: namely, " that it is for mine iniquity that " he hath ſmote me and hid himſelf." This my ſoul knows full well, and I loathe myſelf in my own ſight for it. O! how he hath ſpared me! none knows, but himſelf, what a heart I have. Sometimes it appears to be too much for him ever to ſave ſuch a ſinner as I have been. He hath damned millions who were never half ſo vile and rebellious as I am; and why ſhould I expect his mercy? Nay, how can I expect eternal love to ſtoop ſo low? O, my faithful brother! if I may venture to call you ſo, you are, according to my thoughts, the higheſt in the divine favour; but I am, and ever ſhall be, the deepeſt in debt. God for ever bleſs you. I have a ſtrong perſuaſion that whatever you ſhall aſk of your heavenly Father, he will give it you.

Your charge is true, I have gone on frowardly in the way of my heart; I have rebelled, murmured, and even invited unbelief; and that beſetting ſin appears ſo ſtrong, that nothing but divine Power and eternal Love can ever remove the bar. But I muſt have done, and go out after ſome of the loſt, ſcattered, ſcabbed ſheep, that are left in the wilderneſs. God bleſs you and reward you, muſt ever be the prayer of

J. J.

LETTER LIII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

DEAR SIR,

It is of neceſſity I ſend theſe lines. I am like Elihu, my belly is as new wine which hath no vent; I muſt ſpeak, that I may be refreſhed. I know not how to give flattering titles, yet I think I may call you my ſpiritual father, as Paul was to the Galatians. I once heard you deliver your Maſter's meſſage at a village near Gainſborough, in Lincolnſhire, about fifteen years ago, when I firſt ſet out in religion. Since that time I have paſt through various changes, and for the moſt part have dwelt in dreary deſerts, on parched ground, yea, in a wilderneſs; till it pleaſed God to ſend you once more after me, where you found me, at C———, Bucks, a little more than a year ſince; when your Father and my Father ſent you with theſe words—*My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him; his ſeed alſo will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.* Theſe were the bleſſed words in the hand of the Spirit that brought me back to my Father's houſe in peace. I conferred

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no longer with fleſh and blood, but ſet to ſearching my Bible, my Father's laſt will, for my portion, made over to me in that covenant made with David's Lord; and I have found it, bleſſed be his holy name! It came at an acceptable time, for I had ſpent my all, and got no better, but rather worſe. I found it was an ancient promiſe—*he ſhall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor alſo, and him that hath no helper; he ſhall redeem their ſouls from deceit and violence, and precious ſhall their blood be in his ſight.* It is a free gift, it is pure gold; and ſince it is gold, I hope, through grace, to be thrifty over it, and not loſe a duſt. But, Sir, it has coſt me the loſs of all my friends; but the loſs of their favour I count my gain, ſince my wealth is concealed in the croſs. Within theſe laſt twelve months I have had the ſoreſt trials from the temptations of the devil, and from the profeſſing world; my whole frame, at times, was as though it was ſet on fire of hell; the enemies of my Lord, and his free grace, have beſet me on every ſide; but, bleſſed be God that girdeth me with ſtrength, and maketh my way perfect, he hath enabled me to pray with David—*Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou beareſt unto thy people. O! viſit me with thy ſalvation, that I may ſee the good of thy choſen, that I may rejoice in the gladneſs of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance!* Sir, ſince the Lord ſent you with the joyful ſound I never could ſit any longer under any of the letter miniſters; and becauſe of this they haraſs me with the names of

Antinomian

Antinomian and a narrow ſoul; but, bleſſed be God, I know whom I ſerve in the Spirit of his Son, for he enables me, at times, to cry, Abba Father. I came to hear you at A——, on Thurſday evening, with a good appetite, and I had as good a ſupper as ever I had in my life; I was made drunk, but not with wine; my cup ran over. I had not one wink of ſleep that night; I was very certain I had got Jacob's bleſſing, and run away with it; and I could not help ſubſcribing with my hand to the Lord, and calling myſelf by the name of Iſrael. Before meeting I called at a houſe of one of Moſes' diſciples, there was S—— M——, with ſome more; I being like a ſpeckled bird, they began to ſhoot at me, wondering that I could find no preacher to ſuit me, aſking me ſome fooliſh queſtions; I anſwered them in Solomon's words, which ſeemed to make their faces red. I thought of his *fool*, *peſtle*, and *mortar*; but forbore ſpeaking, for fear of loſing my ſupper. The greateſt crime was, I had left the means, and all God's people. I aſked them where they thought God was worſhipped; they ſaid at M——; I brought this paſſage—*Thus ſaith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footſtool, where is the houſe that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my reſt?* but they ſeemed to me neither to know Zion, nor Zion's God. You, Sir, coming ſoon after to deſcribe Zion literally, and then ſpiritually; that God had broke up houſekeeping, and dwelt in the hearts of believers; and that ſhe was redeemed with judg-

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ment and righteouſneſs; judgment to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice, and righteouſneſs to put on this comely woman; my heart was filled with joy and gladneſs, and I have been feeding on it ever ſince, and my ſoul ſays, What hath the Lord wrought? After meeting, I had a great deſire to ſpeak to my father; I came to the inn; it was I that took hold of your hand before that young man with light buſhy hair; but ſeeing S—— M——, with whom I had been diſputing, my courage failed, and, you not knowing me, I could hardly ſpeak, but ſet off home, for fear of company, for I wanted to go alone. I was determined to ſend a few lines; I hope you, Sir, will excuſe my freedom, as it is the firſt letter I ever ſent to a religious friend in all my life. May God bleſs you, and ſend you to M—— again, with ſome more good news from heaven. God willing, I hope to ſpend one half hour with my father. I hope I ſhall not ſhame you, Sir; my outer dreſs is as good as any of Moſes' diſciples in M——, though I count it but dung and droſs.

I am your's in the Lord, and in the bond of the everlaſting covenant,

J. F.

LETTER LIV.

To Mr. J—— F——.

DEAR BROTHER,

I REJOICED at the reception of yours. I knew that I had been purſuing, but I knew not what; for ſometimes we hunt a fox, ſometimes a wolf, ſometimes a roe, and ſometimes a ſheep; the two former to the wilderneſs to their own covert, the latter to the King's dale and the good fold. Verily I ſay unto you, that there is joy in the preſence of the angels of God when the loſt ſheep is found. If thou haſt loſt one earthly friend, my ſon, thou haſt gained a thouſand heavenly ones, which are more precious and valuable. Thoſe that come to mount Zion are never friendleſs nor deſolate. Love unites us with the church of the firſt-born, and with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect: we come under the miniſtry of an innumerable company of angels, to God the Judge of all, and to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel; and who can be friendleſs that is united to ſuch a bleſſed company, and who have their converſation in heaven among them?

them? O! how ſenſibly have I felt and enjoyed the preſence of thoſe, when my affections have been with my treaſure, and when the viſitations of God have preſerved my ſpirit; when the glory of God hath been freſh in me, and his ſecret upon my tabernacle. Theſe are pledges, earneſts, and foretaſtes of the great reward; yea, the firſtfruits of the Spirit, which enſure the whole harveſt.

Seek the Lord, and thou ſhalt live; ſeek his face evermore: and, if Jeſus is not to be found among thy acquaintance, quit them; if he is not to be found in the means, leave them alſo. Many congregations are like the Saviour's ſepulchre after his reſurrection, nothing is to be found but the grave-clothes and the napkin; I mean the external garb and the old vail; no light, no life. Seek not the living among the dead. To your cloſet, to your Bible, and to the fields to meditate: the ſoul that prays in ſecret ſhall be rewarded openly; the ſcriptures teſtify of Jeſus; and, while Iſaac was meditating in the field, the camels arrived; his thoughts went out to meet his God, and God met him with a choice gift, a woman that feared the Lord. Never was there more profeſſion and leſs poſſeſſion than now; never did this iſland ſwarm with hypocrites as at this time. A name to live, and that is all. The ſoul that ſits down contented under the miniſtration of death is a quiet member; and he that oppoſes the power of godlineſs is a zealous man: but God will have a remnant, and there are a few names even

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in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they ſhall walk with him in white raiment, for he accounts them worthy. The Lord make and keep thee of this highly favoured and happy number, is the prayer and deſire of,

Your's in Chriſt Jeſus,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LV.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received and read your laſt favour, and ſome more that have come to L——; and cannot help thinking that you muſt ſpeak, that you may be eaſed, the bottle ſeems to be ſo full. I wiſh I could ſay ſo; but if I ſpeak I am not eaſed, for my little pitcher is ſoon emptied, and I am like a dry tree. I came home laſt week from my journey very poorly; I preached in three places, and in the two firſt

had very comfortable ſeaſons; but before I got to the laſt, I was ſhut up, dark, and bound; and ſo I have continued ever ſince, and am now very poorly and low with a bad cold, which is the cauſe of your not ſeeing me in town this week. I think I can never be made to ſtand. There is no ſtrength in me, and I am much afraid that I never yet had the true light. Thoſe that believe in the Saviour ſhall no longer walk in darkneſs; and this ſhews that I cannot believe in the light that I may be a child of light. How happy would I be if I could but continue in the enjoyment of the little that I have at times taſted! I think the Lord, at times, hath clothed me with power; and that his preſence, in a meaſure, has been with me: but I am not certain it is he; yet, in this ſweet letter of yours, there are many things applicable to my caſe, and many things that my ſoul earneſtly hopes and prays for. I truſt my inward conflicts are not altogether for ſin, though I ought to ſuffer a deal for that; and if I did but know that I had an intereſt in the Redeemer's love, I think I would willingly ſuffer to the day of my death. There are certainly doors opening for me to preach, notwithſtanding all the oppoſitions made by men; and that men, who have for ſo many years profeſſed the goſpel, ſhould ſet themſelves againſt me, is aſtoniſhing; neither can I ſee why they ſhould be ſo exaſperated as to vilify my character, except it be for the truth's ſake; for when I was preſuming in ſin and falſe confidence, no tongue was

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moved againſt me. I cannot now expect to have the pleaſure of ſeeing you till the faſt-day is over. Do you think there is yet a proſpect of our nation being ſaved? Sometimes, you know, that a Noah, Daniel, and Job, ſhall only ſave themſelves; and, at other times, one Moſes ſhall ſtand in the gap, and make up the breach. The French have been the lovers that this nation has doted upon, whom they have admired for years: their faſhions, language, manners, and cuſtoms, have been adopted; and is it not likely that we ſhall have enough of them? Many, many from this town and country deſire and wiſh their beſt reſpects to you, and are in great expectation of ſeeing the ſummer coming on, in hope then of ſeeing you in the country again. God bleſs you, is the deſire and prayer of

Your much obliged friend,

J. J.

LETTER LVI.

To the Rev. Mr. J———.

Grace and peace be with thee.

BELOVED OF GOD,

If there is any new wine in my bottle, it is for thy uſe; all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, life or death. They that water ſhall be watered themſelves, and they that ſcatter ſhall increaſe; God will dry up the green tree, and cauſe the dry tree to flouriſh. For every comfortable ſeaſon, my ſon, be thankful; knowing that we have, by ſin, forfeited all claim upon God for any mercy, whether in Providence or grace. Enlargement and contraction, liberty and bondage, love and fear, will all work in turn more or leſs; and thoſe that have none of theſe changes fear not God.

God will make thee ſtand, and put ſtrength in thee too when thy ſtrength is all gone; but this is not thy happy caſe yet. There is a good deal of ſtiffneſs in the iron ſinew of thy neck, it cannot bow to the yoke; there is ſtrength in thy free will; you cannot *accept the puniſhment of your iniquity*, nor yield

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to bear the indignation of the Lord, although thou haſt ſinned againſt him. Nor haſt thou loſt all the power of thine arm: thou art ſtill working, tugging, and ſtriving, in thine own ſtrength, in order to ſubdue ſin, pleaſe God, and recommend thyſelf to his favour; and thou expecteſt his approbation, his ſmiles, his bleſſings, and his working power, to attend thee on the footing of theſe things; and when he withdraws, or refuſes to meet thee in this way, and cuts thine expectations off, then thine heart fretteth againſt him; this thy way is thy folly; what God does for us is not for our ſake, but for his own name's ſake, and for his dear Son's ſake; Chriſt will be all to thee when thou art nothing. The true light that ſhines into God's elect, my ſon, diſcovers various things beſides the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. When the Lord ſhined round about Paul and into his heart, it was no leſs to him than *the light of life*; and the commandment, with all its unlimited demands, immediately followed—now ſin revived, now concupiſcence appeared, now the carnal enmity, pride, wrath, and the web of human righteouſneſs, ſhewed itſelf; and all fruits brought forth unto death were diſcovered—*all things which are reproved are made manifeſt by the light which doth appear, for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light.* In this light we diſcover the ſpirituality of God's law; the wrath, the bondage, and fear that it works; the demands of it, and the poor help and encouragement that it gives to the poor ſinner. It was in the Lord's

light that David saw this—*I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.* In this light we see this world in its true colours, and the state of all men in it—*we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* In this light we see the dumb dog, the foolish shepherd, and the blind guide; for *though the Lord give you the bread and water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers.* It is in God's light that we see the vanity of all natural religion, the insufficiency of a form of godliness, the vanity of human traditions, doctrines, commandments, and precepts, of men—*whatsoever I counted gain here, I count loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but dung and dross, that I may win Christ.* Furthermore, in the light of God we see the prophecies, and Christ the substance of them, who is the light that shines in a dark place, or in all the prophets' dark sayings, until the day-dawn and day-star arise in our hearts. Once more, it is this light that leads us to *see that just One,* who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person—*God hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;* this *is seeing him who is invisible;* that is, it is seeing the Lord in his own light, who is invisible to all natural men. It is in this light that we see Christ to be the only way to the Father, who himself is the only path of the just, and who leads us from one discovery

diſcovery to another, till we come to perfect day. Now when my ſon comes to read this, can he ſay that the God of this world hath blinded his eyes, that the light of the goſpel ſhines not to him, that the old vail is ſtill upon his heart, and that he walks in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goeth? I trow not.

Whatſoever bleſſing comes from God leads the heart in faith, in affection, in gratitude, and thankfulneſs to God; which faith and affection is attended with an inward witneſs for God, and which witneſs ſilences every accuſer for that time, for faith is never without a witneſs. Pay no regard to oppoſition; ſoldiers of Chriſt muſt endure hardneſs, and fight the good fight of faith.

Old men are not always wiſe, nor do the aged underſtand judgment.

An over fondneſs of reputation and character cauſed Jonah his perilous voyage. To be oppoſed, perſecuted, reviled, and ſlandered for truth and conſcience ſake, is the badge of a real diſciple of Jeſus, and the certain lot of all his faithful followers. When the devil loſes a willing captive, or a letter preacher, which is one of the nets of that artful fowler, he is ſure to reſent it, by foreſtalling the market of thoſe *who buy the truth and ſell it not*; but let that ſerpent go on, and fill up his meaſure; he ſhall be trampled under our feet, and we ſhall judge him, and ſure I am that he will have judgment without mercy, for he has ſhewed no mercy

upon Chriſt's lambs and doves. If God ſets before thee an open door, none can ſhut it; nor can the word of God be bound; the word that he ſends ſhall accompliſh the end, the candle that he lights ſhall neither be put under a bed nor under a buſhel, the Lord's city cannot be hid, nor ſhall Haman himſelf ever prevail againſt the ſeed of the Jews; we fight no enemy but what is already conquered or ſlain—*be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*; I have fought the field, and won the day, and therefore be of good cheer, for both the victory and the ſpoil are yours—*then is the prey of a great ſpoil divided; the lame take the prey.* The word of the Lord ſhall ſound out, and the fame of his ſervants ſhall be ſpread abroad; not only by the recipients of truth, but from the lips of envy—*theſe are the ſervants of the Moſt High God,* ſays the poor girl poſſeſſed with the devils when ſhe followed Barnabas and Paul. That thou mayeſt miniſter as of the ability that God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt; that thou mayeſt hold the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience, and by theſe war a good warfare; and that every member of Chriſt may fill and magnify his office, ſo that he that propheſieth may wait on his prophecies, he that teacheth on teaching, he that exhorteth on exhortation; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that prayeth, with cheerfulneſs; is the hearty, unfeigned, and undiſſembled deſire and prayer of, dear ſon, thine affectionately in the kingdom and patience of Chriſt,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LVII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My letters never ſtand long unanſwered with you; the anſwer ſeems to be ready to what I wiſh to know, though I can but expreſs it in a very blundering manner. I received your laſt favour in due time, and, if I had wrote then, I could ſay it was ſavoury meat, ſuch as my ſoul loveth; it was all that was in my heart, but you tell it far better than I can deſcribe it; I know it when it is ſhewn, but can find neither light nor words to ſet it forth, and this is the truth of the matter; ſo dark, ſtupid, dull, and ignorant I am. I know that "legal ſtrivings, "together with the hurrying and terrifying influence "of Satan, drive into the wilderneſs;" drive from God, but never to him; and when it is night all the beaſts of prey creep out of their dens, corruptions I feel then ſwarming, and on the back of that I rebel awfully againſt God, becauſe it is not better with me; and when I have cried in this diſtreſs, and have obtained an anſwer, and ſometimes I have found a letter from you to be the anſwer, but ſoon after

after legal pride will begin to work, ſelf-ſufficiency, carnal eaſe, take place, and this calls for the ſcourge again, and down I go as miſerable as ever, till I feel my heart heaving with rebellion; and ſurely this is the fooliſhneſs of a man perverting his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord. It ſuffices nothing that I am not tempted to groſs acts of ſin, while theſe evils haunt my ſoul, and bring me into captivity to their power ſo eaſy. Pride, unbelief, murmuring, unclean thoughts, and rebellion, are the ſins which alternately worry me and make my life bitter; and yet I often think not bitter enough, otherwiſe I might be delivered from them. I know they have been all at times diſperſed by one little ray of light from the Saviour's bleſſed countenance; but this has been but of a very ſhort duration, and when it is gone, I fall again to queſtion the whole, whether it was from him or not. And when I have received a letter from you, which has been attended with a comfortable ſeal, my ſtate and my feelings ſo clearly deſcribed, that I could venture my life it was true, my heart broken, and the darkneſs diſpelled in reading it; yet I have called all in queſtion again, and feared that I had applied to myſelf what did not belong to me.

I have reaſon to hope that two women who belonged to us died lately happy in the Lord. When I firſt viſited them, they were in great diſtreſs; but before they died, they were raiſed to a ſweet hope.

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The Lord himſelf bleſs you, and guide both tongue and pen, is the prayer of,

Your very affectionate friend,

J. J.

LETTER LVIII.

To the Rev. Mr. J———.

It is an eaſy matter with me, my dear friend, to ſend you an account of legal pride, ſelf-righteouſneſs, infidelity, rebellion, and the evil workings of concupiſcence, for my poor heart (according to the fleſh) is ſtuffed with nothing elſe, therefore it is out of the abundance of the heart that my mouth ſpeaketh; however it is he that hateth his life in this world, that ſhall keep it to life eternal; for God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts: he that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted; that which is highly eſteemed among men is abomination in the ſight of God; while thoſe who look at him

whom they have pierced ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, and thoſe that receive a new heart and a new ſpirit ſhall loathe themſelves in their own ſight for their iniquity. If you want any deſcription of evil, or of the workings of it, I am never at a loſs for that, for when I would do good, evil is always preſent with me; but if you want any thing that is good you puzzle me, for how to perform that which is good I find not. If my heart is warm with the Lord's love, and I am heaping a thouſand bleſſings on his name for his goodneſs to me, I can feel, perceive, yea, hear with ſomething of an ear which is within me, a thouſand curſes go through my mind in a minute; where they come from God knows, but there they be, and there they come and go; but they leave no ſting of guilt, no fear of death, nor any dread of damnation, behind them; nor does God frown, rebuke, reprove, or hide his face from me, on the account of them; while this infernal flame goes hiſſing, like a red-hot ſhot, through the ear and mind of the veſſel of mercy, I ſhudder, ſuck up my breath, watch their departure, and keep my mouth as it were with a bridle, till they are gone, and then go on again with the delightful trade of bleſſing him that bleſſes me. Formerly I uſed to view theſe fiery darts to be my own ſin, and tremble at their dreadful effects; but the killing force of them is now gone, Chriſt is the ſhield of faith, and his blood quenches all the fiery darts of this wicked one; for they leave no guilt behind them, nor do

they

they cauſe any diſtance or ſeparation between me and my God; becauſe the Mediator and his fountain opened is the mercy-ſeat between my God and my ſoul: the breach is cloſed, and Satan cannot open it again, therefore I am not afraid of the terrors by night, nor of the arrows that flee by day; becauſe the guilt of my ſins, and the wrath of my God, do not meet and work in my conſcience together as before. Perfect love did once caſt out all fear, and torment too; and, though I do not always enjoy that love in the heat and flame of it, yet, it having caſt out fear and wrath, it keeps them out; love keeps its ground, and the devil cannot make me believe that God hates me, nor can he rank me among the claſſes of his enemies; for he that knoweth all things, knows that I love him dearly. But that which puzzles me moſt of all is, when I have been remiſs in duty, cold, indifferent, carnal, lifeleſs, unbelieving, rebellious as a devil; full of murmuring, cavelling, diſputing the point; determined to have my own way, come life or come death; curſing my hard fate, the day of my birth, and the man that brought tidings of it; wiſhing myſelf a beaſt, not a beaſt inſtead of a ſinner, but a beaſt inſtead of a ſaint. When, after this, I have been debaſed, and forced to bow, and expected, that if there was any holineſs in God, any truth, any juſtice, or any reſentment left in him, that he would ſhew it, and eaſe himſelf of ſuch an adverſary, and be avenged of ſuch a rebel as I; but here I could

get

get no anſwer. All I could gather from his conduct appeared to me to be this: I will talk to you by and by. And when I have kept watching for the rod, knowing that my fool's back called for ſtrokes, there has come a ſmile, a temporal preſent, great energy in prayer, much pardon, acceſs, nearneſs, familiarity, the deepeſt humility, and an account of good done in the pulpit; this, above all things under heaven, makes the Rev. Mr. Huntington nothing, and Jeſus all in all, this has bled my ſoul to death a thouſand times over. Don't ſend the ſubſcribers yet, a month's time will do. I truſt it will be one of the moſt profitable works that I have ever ſent out, but the bleſſing depends upon Him. God bleſs thee.

Ever thine,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LIX.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE received and read your laſt favour, and the Lord knows that it came in ſeaſon. You know not how ſweet it proved to me, and how thankful my ſoul was for it; and though, I believe, you deſigned no more than to give me ſome account of the Lord's kind dealings under the preſent diſpenſation with your own ſoul, yet there was ſomething for me too. I ſaid, after I had read it, that I knew the voice that was in it; and indeed there is a voice, as well in your letters as your miniſtry, that I cannot hear any where elſe; and I am ſure, at times, that I have heard it, and that I know it when I hear it again; and I have ſecretly ſaid, "Is it not the "voice of my beloved coming?" But you ſeem to intimate that there is a deal of the "noiſy clamour "of unbelief" in mine; then it is no wonder that I underſtand it ſo well, for my heart is ſtuffed with nothing elſe; and I feel the influence of that deſperate ſpirit, which you mention, ſo ſtrong on my poor ſoul, that at times it makes me deviliſh, like himſelf.

himſelf. Next to my own ſalvation, there is nothing in this world that affords me greater ſatisfaction than to ſee the hand of the Lord with you; your ſoul has been delivered from the battle, and you ſhall return in triumph. If you had been worſted in this conflict, I knew I muſt fall, and fall for ever; if the foundations can be deſtroyed, then what ſhall the righteous do! But this ſhall never be, nor will he ever ſuffer a ſervant of his, whom he knows contends for his cauſe, and for his truth, to be confounded in the preſence of fools. I knew, from the beginning, that you were encountering Satan in the garb of an angel of light, and a ſervant of his, whom he had transformed into the likeneſs of a miniſter of righteouſneſs. I never had a ſingle doubt on my mind about the lawfulneſs or the neceſſity of the war; no, nor of the event of it neither: and I now find that my faith was the ſubſtance of what I hoped for, and the evidence of what I did not then ſee. But how grievous ſuch things are to nature, none can tell but thoſe who feel them. Far leſs than what you have met with makes me more like a devil than any thing elſe; every thing that touches me, or goes contrary to me, makes me rebel like a tiger; and, what is very ſtrange, I find that all ſeverities cannot tame me, nothing but kindneſs humbles me: and how can this be expected under ſo much rebellion! But unexpectedly it comes at times. The account I had of the P— of B— was ſweetened; I cannot tell you what comfortable

and

and ſweet views I had of its contents, and with what power they abode upon me for ſome few days; and I thought, if I could lie in them, with the feelings and ſenſations I had then, I ſhould be contented to wait for health to the laſt moment of my life. But O! they are gone! nothing continues with me long. I am like a broken veſſel, in whom there is no pleaſure. And where am I to look for more? Let me look where I may, I know that it will never come but from one object—it muſt come from Jeſus, and no where elſe. It grieves me to ſay give, give, when I know there are ſo many things that call beſides. The good Lord be with your Spirit, is the deſire and prayer of

Your real friend,

J. J.

LETTER LX.

To the Rev. Mr. J———.

I THANKFULLY received the epiſtle of my friend, and bleſs my God for owning, or attending with his bleſſing, any thing written or ſpoken by ſo unlikely and unworthy an inſtrument; but he knows his poor ſervant, and I know my kind, dear, and ever bleſſed Maſter; this bears me up, and helps me on. He has put the helmet of ſalvation on my head, he has clad me with zeal as with a cloak, he has girded me with ſtrength for the battle, and has filled me with power and might, by his Spirit, that I may ſhew Jacob his tranſgreſſions, and the houſe of Iſrael their ſins; he has told me in my ſtudy, *that he will avenge his own elect, and deal treacherouſly with them that have dealt treacherouſly with me*; and this reckoning will ſhortly be brought in, and they that hate me ſhall pay it, and thoſe that favour my righteous cauſe ſhall ſee it, and iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth. Judgment may appear at times to linger, and becauſe it is not ſpeedily executed, the hearts of ſinners are fully ſet in them to do evil; but when God is known by the judgments which he executes,

and he avenges the cauſe of his ſervants, many a halting ſoul comes to be at a point, *judgment ſhall return unto righteouſneſs, and the upright in heart ſhall follow it.* When the *ſticks* of the eleven tribes appeared dry and barren, after being laid before the teſtimony, and only Aaron's rod budded, it ſtopped the murmuring of the children of Iſrael; and this miniſter of Satan, being ſet up in oppoſition to thy friend, will make the ſimple look both ways, and in time ſee for themſelves, whether God proſpers the calf-worſhippers at Bethel, or his own inſtitution at Jerûſalem; or whether the throne of iniquity can have fellowſhip with God, who frame miſchief by a law. The houſe of David will increaſe, and the houſe of Saul ſhall decreaſe. And I muſt tell thee, that the things which happened unto me have fell out rather to the furtherance of the goſpel: the newspapers, hand-bills, and pamphlets, have been of the ſame uſe; as the voice of the devil *Pithon*, in the young *witch*, mentioned in the Acts, who proclaimed *Paul* and *Barnabas* as ſervants of the Moſt High God, who ſhew us the way of ſalvation. Curioſity hath led many to hear what ſort of a monſter I am, and not a few, like *Doeg* the Edomite, are detained before the Lord. Mr. Fenton, by his book, hath acted the part of thoſe accuſers of the adultereſs woman, who brought her to Chriſt, and left her there, when they themſelves were ſent off under the accuſations and curſes of their own conſcience; and his ſcribble may be the means of ſending ſome to

hear, who ſhall hear to profit, though the word hath never profited him. Howbeit he meaneth no good, nor doth his heart think it; but God may mean, think, and intend all this, for his thoughts are not as our thoughts.

The bondſmen who are to be reſponſible, if report be true, are ſix in number. They have begun to build without counting the coſt; but the top of this tower will not reach unto heaven, for God hath bound himſelf, in honour to his great name, to confound their language, and to ſcatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts; he will pull down the mighty from their ſeats, in order to exalt them that are of low degree and of light eſteem.

The majority of his audience, if report be true, are females; theſe ſmell a ſweet ſavour under him, and are very much benefited, eſpecially thoſe *that have waxed wanton and kicked againſt Chriſt*, and ſuch *as have already turned aſide after Satan:* the ewes great with young, and thoſe that feel the cloudy and dark day, abide by the old tents; theſe *cannot feed themſelves with their own deceivings*, becauſe of the terrible famine. The former claſs of thoſe honourable women require a peculiar ſort of claſs-leaders; to be biſhop of theſe, a man muſt firſt be proved whether he be, like Eli's ſons, a real child of Belial, one that is fond of creeping into houſes, apt to feel for, and ſympathize with, the weaker veſſels; moreover, he muſt have a good report amongſt theſe daughters of Zion, as one that can

allure through the luſt of the fleſh, and be touched with the feelings of their infirmities, and not only ſpread his ſkirt over them who creep to his feet in the barn floor, but he muſt have a mantle of love, of ſuch dimenſions as will cover all their works of darkneſs; he muſt hear confeſſions, ſay maſs, and be ſure to viſit when the good man is not at home; he muſt receive peace-offerings, and be preſent when Mrs. Piety wipes her mouth and pays her vows. Moſt of this ſtamp who herded with us, are now led captive, being zealouſly affected; and, I believe, ſome of them will, ere long, be made more fruitful under the preſent paſtor than they have been with us; for, I believe, he is a paſtor after their own hearts, whether he feeds them with knowledge and underſtanding, or not. The Almighty ſeems to make me a ſharp threſhing inſtrument, having teeth; and, as he uſes me to beat them off, this wind of doctrine which blows to and fro carries them away, and when I have taken the vile from the precious I ſhall be as God's mouth.

Another ſort which God hath cut off from us, are the wiſe, the fat, and the ſtrong, which he has promiſed to feed with judgment; theſe have long loathed the manna, and pined after the garlic, cucumbers, and melons, of Egypt; they have been pecking at *the king in Jeſhurun* a good while, and have at laſt appointed a captain over them, having for ſome time, *in heart, returned into the land of Ham*. Theſe, for a few weeks, have reigned as

kings without us, for we were quite a dead weight upon their aſpiring excellency; but better is a young and wiſe child, than one of theſe old and fooliſh kings, who know not to be admoniſhed; but theſe crowned locuſts are gone—and ſince *the Lord hath ſcattered theſe kings in it, it hath been as white as the ſnow in Salmon.* In a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and ſilver, but alſo of wood and of earth; and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour: God hath in mercy purged us from ſome of theſe; and, indeed, we have too long lain among theſe pots; but when this old furniture is purged out, we ſhall be as the wings of a dove, covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold, having more of the heavenly Dove, and his grace, deſcending upon us. Since the departure of theſe ſmoking firebrands, the live coals from the altar have revived and glowed, and brought the children of light a little more together. Many confeſs they can feel a difference in the climate, and are ſtruggling hard for the torrid zone. The Lord bleſs thee, and keep thee, and lift the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, is the prayer of thine to ſerve,

W. H. S. S.

P. S. I am told, by a perſon who had lately the curioſity to count them, that the audience of a certain preacher amounted to twenty-three ladies, and eleven gentlemen.

LETTER LXI.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE been much indiſpoſed through a cold, almoſt ever ſince you left L——, and am now indeed very ill with it; but this is not the worſt; I am very much diſtreſſed in ſoul. Such darkneſs and bondage have gathered over me, as I think never did before. I have much wondered why it ſhould be thus, eſpecially as I have had lately the ſweeteſt frame, and the moſt comfortable proſpect, I ever experienced. Under your preaching I know I felt the power; I found it ſuitable, ſweet, and comfortable; but now all is gone, and I am in a worſe ſtate than ever. I have preſumed in believing that any good that I have ever heard belongs to me. I have always been forward and bold from my youth up, and this will be my deſtruction. You have endeavoured to bring me on by encouragements, and I have taken them at times, but they could not belong to me; nor do I know what can do me good, ſince the truth cannot; but, notwithſtanding all, I

know your labour will not be in vain, you will receive the reward, though I may not be the fruit; and your miniſtry has been bleſſed at L —— (though ſome ſpeak evil of it), many have been revived, and begin to look out of obſcurity; this I can plainly ſee: but the worſt of it is, that I envy them, and I think hate them. This is awful! and I believe this has brought me into this bondage. I thought, ſhall I ſerve as a drudge to hunt them from their falſe coverts, and drive them out of their refuges of lies? and will they come out before me at laſt? I determined, in my heart, to ſtrip them of every morſel they had received, and make them as black as the devil, and as miſerable as myſelf. I was angry with you for comforting them, and with them for receiving it when they had no buſineſs with it. And now all the corruptions of my heart boil like a pot, and there is not a ſin that can be named but what is alive in me, and ſure I am to fall by ſome of them. This is the miſerable ſtate I am in, pray I cannot, neither can I think or meditate, and my heart is as hard as a ſtone; filled with darkneſs, confuſion, evil thoughts, hard thoughts of God, envy, hatred, obſtinacy, and as rebellious as the devil himſelf; and it appears to me as if it would be perpetual. I know not where to go. I wiſh, in my ſoul, I could run from this work. If I had but the opportunity of hearing you, I would not mention theſe things even to you, but would watch and wait what the Lord ſhould ſay to me, without troubling

troubling you with ſuch ſtuff; but this ſeems to be the only remedy left, therefore I hope you will forgive me, and pray for me; and God Almighty bleſs you, is the earneſt deſire of,

Your affectionate friend,

J. J.

LETTER LXII.

To the Rev. Mr. J———.

I WAS juſt going to ſay, that I have received the laſt dying ſpeech and confeſſion of my dearly beloved ſon in the faith. He dies daily, and yet believes that he ſhall never die at all; he is chaſtened, but not killed; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed: for I ſhall ſee him again, bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jeſus. Chriſt was once a bond ſervant, ſo were we; he was a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief, ſo muſt we; he was deſpiſed by the world and deſerted by friends, ſo ſhall we; he died under the curſe of the law, the commandment comes, ſin revives, and we die

die alſo; he was nailed to the croſs, and our old man muſt be crucified with him. The ſword of juſtice was drawn againſt him, and the ſword of the Spirit muſt pierce us; an horrible dread overwhelms him, and we muſt meditate terror; he drinks the bitter cup of divine wrath, and we muſt taſte the cup of fatherly anger, for in a little wrath he ſmites us; he is deſerted of his Father, and for a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, ſaith the Lord; he was bruiſed for our iniquities, and he will ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and all the Lord loves he chaſtens. They that are planted together in the likeneſs of his death, ſhall be planted together in the likeneſs of his reſurrection; they that partake of the ſufferings of Chriſt, ſhall partake alſo of the conſolations; for as he was, ſo are we in this world; the world knows us not, becauſe it knew him not.

Thoſe ſweet frames and comfortable proſpects, my ſon, are all earneſt pennies of the rich grace that ſhall follow; every *cordial* is a forerunner of a fainting fit, and every fit a prelude to the cup of conſolation. This is the day of adverſity, in which thou muſt conſider; the day of proſperity will ſucceed it, in which thou ſhalt be joyful. They that ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy; they that mourn ſhall be comforted; they that weep ſhall laugh; and they that hunger ſhall be filled.

If you felt power under my miniſtry; if it was ſuitable, ſweet, and comfortable, the Spirit muſt apply

ply it, the excellency of the power is of God; if ſuitable, it was as nails faſtened by the Maſter of aſſemblies; if ſweet, it came from him whoſe mouth is moſt ſweet; if comfortable, it was from the conſolation of Iſrael. "But now all is gone, and you "are in a worſe ſtate than ever." No, my ſon, this is the beſt change that ever rolled over thee yet; the next viſit ſets thee upon the ſecond round of Jacob's ladder; every future embrace will be attended with a ſweet flow of godly ſorrow, which will lead on to a cordial reception into the divine favour, and into the happy enjoyment of pardon, peace, and love, and then comes repentance that needs never to be repented of.

"But thou art too bold." Not at all, my ſon; the ſelf-loſt, ſelf-deſpairing ſinner, who ſues for hope in Chriſt, and puts his mouth in the duſt to get it, may come boldly to the throne of grace; the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence to ſuch, and the violent take it by force.

"For thee to be the drudge to hunt them out "of their refuges, and then for them to come forth "before thee," is, doubtleſs, enough to provoke thee to jealouſy, conſidering that thou art the ſhepherd, paſtor, and leader of the flock. However, there muſt certainly be ſome diſcoveries of the beauty, comelineſs, and excellency of Chriſt, or there never would be theſe debates, contentions, and ſcuffles, to know who ſhall ſtep in firſt at the moving of the waters. Go on, my ſon, ſtrive, run, wreſtle, any how,

how, ſo as thou canſt but win Chriſt, and be found in him; and if thou canſt not get firſt out, act Jacob's part, catch hold of the heel of every one that aims at the bleſſing, and tell them, that if they ſtrive for maſtery, they ſhall not be crowned except they ſtrive lawfully.

"But thou waſt angry with me for comforting them." Pray forgive me this wrong, for I was only the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Jehovah is the God of all comfort, as well as the Father of all mercies. There are many more grievous things in thine epiſtle, but they are all briefly comprehended in this ſaying, *Jealouſy is the rage of a man.* My hope of thee, my ſon, is ſteadfaſt; none of theſe things move me; I have thee in my heart, to live and die with. I ſhall counſel thee to ſhew a little lenity; that is, after thou haſt pulled their hair, ſmitten, wounded, and ſtript them, that thou wilt endeavour to make reſtitution to them as ſoon as the Lord ſhall comfort thee again, that they may receive damage by thee in nothing; and you can take this text, "If "we are comforted, it is for your edification," &c.

God bleſs thee, my ſon; ever thine,

W. H. SS.

LETTER

LETTER LXIII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY VERY DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,

IT is an unſpeakable bleſſing that ever your works fell into my hand, and more particularly that I have had the opportunity of hearing you preach; for I have been in bondage more than ſix years through the fear of death, and not knowing whether I ſhould be ſaved or loſt; but, bleſſed be God, when you was at G——, it pleaſed the Searcher of hearts to give you a text to ſuit my caſe, both in the firſt and ſecond ſermon, on the prodigal ſon. I heard a diſcourſe from the ſame text a little more than ſeven years ſince, but as the preacher did not appear to know either the prodigal or his Father, he could only preach to pleaſe men. I heard him again, but did not like him, for he was an Arminian; but my wife uſed to attend ſuch men, and I uſed to go with her now and then, till at length we entered into ſome contention about religion, and I told her that my father knew the ſcriptures; but ſhe ſaid ſhe hated to hear him talk about them, which ſtaggered me greatly. Upon this I found that I was ignorant of

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the right way, and ſecretly prayed to God to teach me what was right, and I diligently read my Bible; but at length I got hold of an old book, written by a tinker, the title of it is "*The Sighs and Groans* "*of the Damned.*" In reading that book and my Bible, and praying to God, I got into a deſperate ſtate; and the author, ſpeaking in the perſon of Dives, came ſo home to me, that I thought I was the very man; and it ſtirred up my conſcience, and ſet me to work, to do ſomething for Chriſt; and I uſed to ſay to myſelf, O, if I did but know what I might do for Chriſt! And, in this fruitleſs toil, I got worſe and worſe; for the wickedneſs of my own heart, the blaſphemies of the devil, and vile repreſentations of the Saviour, that were preſented to my view, made me hang down my head like one melancholy, not knowing from whence theſe evils came; and in this labour I got farther and farther from God, for whatſoever is not of faith is ſin. Some time after this, I was at work in the capacity of a maſon's clerk, and ſuffered many hardſhips on that account, for I fled from my own buſineſs for conſcience ſake, becauſe I could not work on the Lord's day; and one day, as I was ruminating on my ſtate, and pondering over theſe things, it appeared as if a dim cloud dropt from off my face, or, as Paul ſays, *ſcales fell from my eyes*, and then I ſaw where I was, and on what ground I ſtood, for God was come near to me to judgment; and an awful figure I cut before him, for all my ſins ſtood

in battle array before me, which brought this ſcripture to my mind, *men ſhall give account for every idle word*; this I found was true, for I had often queſtioned the truth of that word before, thinking God could not remember them all, for I thought him to be ſuch an one as myſelf. But, alas! all my actual tranſgreſſions ſtared me in the face, firſt one came up, and then another, yea, all my ſins from my childhood; then I ſaw the Bible with new eyes, and I had a hell in my conſcience becauſe of the ſins I had committed, for they were done ſo willingly, and with ſuch delight, that I had not one excuſe to make, but begged for mercy; and, bleſſed be his name, he did ſhew me mercy; for, in a few days after, as I was at my work, all on a ſudden Jeſus Chriſt came into my ſoul, like the riſing ſun, and brought ſuch love, joy, and peace, as I can never deſcribe, for it was unſpeakable, and full of glory. Then I had reſt in my ſoul, for I knew that my ſins were pardoned; and I had quietneſs and confidence, yea, a full aſſurance as long as it laſted; and this ſcripture came into my mind, *I am found of them that ſought me not*. Now my heart and affections were drawn up into heaven in a wonderful manner, but I have ſince had as hard work to get them from earth to heaven. Theſe things I had; but, alas! I ſoon took my journey into a far country, and there waſted my ſubſtance with riotous living. And I will tell you the way by which I loſt ſight of theſe things. There was a man in our town who appeared to be very

very godly and circumſpect in his life, which ſecretly drew my affections over to him, and being wonderful in wiſdom and grace, as I thought, he attached me cloſely to him, and I was very fond of him, for *whatſoever he bound on earth, was bound in heaven with me*, for I uſed to look upon him as an angel of light; for he uſed to ſpeak ſo wonderfully of the perfections of our God, and the glorious attributes of Deity, that I have been very joyful to hear him. Sometimes I have mentioned the ſweet communion that I have had with Jeſus Chriſt, but he always cut at that, perſuading me that it was nothing but the workings of my paſſions; and he being ſo wonderful in talk, he acted the part of a thief, ſtript me of my comfort, and ſtole my heart from Jeſus; but I was ſo bound to him that this did not ſhake me off; though we had many ups and downs by the way, yet it was ſome time before we ſeparated, although he uſed openly and wantonly to laugh at me on account of my experience; ſometimes I was in his favour, and ſometimes out. In his ſmiles was life with me, and in his frowns death, for I was always ready to take blame and ſhame to myſelf; but God has ſeparated us, and we never came together ſince, and I believe we never ſhall, for he has mounted the ſcorner's chair.

After this I attended a little prayer-meeting in our town, where there are many profeſſors. From theſe I have received many a wound: but, bleſſed be God, it was not fatal; for it uſed to ſend me to

a throne

a throne of grace to beg of God to teach me according to his promiſe.

It came to paſs, on a time, that I met with my dearly beloved friend A———, and I ſaluted him in the ſtreet, which ſurpriſed him, not knowing much of me ſince I have been in God's ways; but we have been boſom friends ever ſince, and we have often read your works together, and have rejoiced in the goodneſs of God to you-ward, and have been companions with you in tribulation. Your works have been a great ſupport to us, both in ſpiritual and temporal trials, and we have great reaſon to pray for your proſperity while ſo many wiſh for your halting; but all that watch for iniquity ſhall be cut off. Some time ago I got hold of your book called *The Child of Liberty in Legal Bondage*, and read it, and I ſaw myſelf deſcribed in it, and my ſituation, and the means that brought me into it; then I knew what was the matter with me, which led me to cry for liberty, and I have ſecretly longed to come at it by reading your works; but, bleſſed be God, he hath done it by your miniſtry, for he hath had reſpect to the deſire of his poor extravagant ſon. I had ſome workings in my mind about the law; it was on the Wedneſday before you came down, when this text was brought to me, *Whatſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the law*; and this word *whatſoever*, dwelt much on my mind, therefore I ſaw, from that time, a believer is not under the law, for Chriſt is the end of the law for

righteouſneſs to every one that believes. The Friday following this ſcripture came to my mind, *But what went you out for to ſee? a reed ſhaken with the wind*; which I took to be a reproof for my over anxiety to ſee you, for the devil preſſed me ſo in the week with the ſuppoſed crowd that I thought it would be impoſſible to get to hear you; but, bleſſed be God, I did, and greatly to my ſatisfaction; and when you came to the prodigal ſon, it tallied exactly with my experience, and I firmly believed that there was ſomething more in it for me, notwithſtanding all that the devil could do to hinder my coming. When I came to G ———, I retired to a friend's apartment, and prayed to God that his word might come with power to my ſoul: and in very deed it did; for I never had experienced it in that way before. I have often longed and prayed to have a believing view of Jeſus Chriſt in the garden, but I never could. Now, when you began to deſcribe a true ſon of God, the light came into my heart like the twinkling of a little ſtar, and got brighter and brighter, and I found the devil pecking at it, and you ſaid *the enemy will come to take away the ſeed ſown*, and you will become unfruitful; and that very word unfruitful was like a dagger to my heart, for I thought I had been unfruitful enough before. Then the word came again with ſuch power to my ſoul, that I could not contain myſelf; and when you ſaid, *This, my ſon, was dead, and is alive again; he was loſt, and is found; and they began to be merry*:—theſe endearing

endearing words, from ſo loving a father, filled my very heart, till I dropt down upon my ſeat, and thought my heart would burſt with a mixture of joy and grief; this is what I never felt before, though I have often longed for it.

This holy mourning over him came on me again the day you left G ——, and I was obliged to turn aſide to give it vent. This ſpiritual meekneſs does not conſiſt in a gloomy and downcaſt countenance, which is highly eſteemed by ſome, who know nothing about it, though they try to mimic it; but the love, joy, and peace, that comes by believing, is more to me than my neceſſary food, it makes me ſtand in full confidence of my eternal ſafety. O that the ſimplicity of Chriſt may never be withdrawn from me! But, truly, if I had continued in that frame of ſoul that I was in, I could not have done my buſineſs; for my heart and affections were ſo drawn up into heaven, that I really forgot what I was about. One morning, as I awoke early, this paſſage came to my mind, *I ſleep, but my heart awaketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, ſaying, Open to me, my ſiſter, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* This came with ſuch power, and with ſuch delight, as I cannot deſcribe; but ſtill I fear, becauſe I have ſuch a natural propenſity to get into the old legal way again, which cauſes me to cry to God that he would not let me be bereft of the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt

Jeſus; for I proteſt, before God, I would ſooner loſe my life than loſe it: but the Lord has given me a tender conſcience, and a filial fear, and in ſome meaſure the diſcerning of ſpirits, which I hope will be of uſe to me. Pray for me, for you are in my heart to live and die with you; therefore I hope you will excuſe my familiarity with you, for I cannot help making free, ſeeing God hath ſhined through you, and ſpoken by you, to my heart, which I ſhall never forget. The fruits and effects of the ſpirit of bondage I have left out, ſeeing they are ſo fully deſcribed in your above-mentioned book. And now, Sir, I know your goodneſs will excuſe my boldneſs with you, ſeeing it is intended to God's glory, and to ſtrengthen your hands in the work. So I remain your very affectionate and loving ſon,

T. W.

LETTER LXIV.

To T—— W——.

I RECEIVED my dear friend's epiſtle. The contents are, that his name is ſtill great among the Gentiles, and an ointment poured forth to all that feel their need of him. He muſt increaſe, and Moſes ſhall decreaſe; though he hath in every city thoſe that preach him, the ſervant ſhall not ſhare his Maſter's glory, nor ſtand in competition with him. When we get upon the holy mount, Moſes and Elias are ſure to withdraw; but the former will accuſe us all the time we are in the wilderneſs, for it is *the rebellious that dwell in a dry land.* There are few that go from Jeruſalem to Jericho but what fall among thieves: their great light and ſwelling words are wonderouſly enchanting to thoſe who live only upon their inward joys; the former is a wandering ſtar, and the latter a tinkling cymbal, and it is no unuſual thing to ſee a child catch at a lighted candle, and be charmed with the ſound of a fiddle. Such are pimps for Satan. We (like fools) give up ourſelves to their guidance, viewing them as eyes to

the blind, feet to the lame, and as hands to the paralytic; but when theſe offend, we muſt cut off theſe feet, pluck out theſe right eyes, and caſt theſe offenſive hands from us, and appear halt, lame, and maimed, rather than accompany them to hell-fire. Here we go mourning back again to the chief Shepherd, with only two fragments, for theſe are all that are taken *out of the mouth of the lion, a leg and a piece of an ear.* There is a grain of faith left for Jeſus, and a little attention to what he ſhall be pleaſed to ſay to us, and that is all that is perceptible, and ſometimes hardly that. Congregations of hypocrites and heretics are the devil's brothels, and the work of theſe fiddlers is to procure freſh proviſions, and no morſel ſo ſweet as the poor man's ewe-lamb; they rejoice more at the wounding and laming a lamb of the Lord's fold, than they do in the ſlaughter of a thouſand goats, or ten thouſand bulls of Baſhan.

There is, my ſon, a twofold repentance; the one legal, the other evangelical. Judas had the former, the prodigal the latter. The firſt is forced, or extorted, when the wrath of God and the guilt of men meet together in the ſinner's conſcience; this is attended with no hatred to ſin, but to the puniſhment; it is always attended with ſelf-pity and enmity againſt God; this may be ſeen in a ſullen, deſperate wretch going to the gallows; the law works no other than this. Evangelical repentance ſprings from the joyful meeting of the Saviour's dying love

and

and man's miſery in the ſinner's heart, and is the bleſſed effect of pardon, peace, and reconciliation; this is attended with an hatred to ſin and ſelf, and a loving, ſimpathizing with, and mourning over, the Son of God in his dolorous ſufferings for ſinful worms like us; this is not extorted, but poured forth, and the more the love of Jeſus operates, the more it flows; this is repentance unto life, for the living God is the object of it, and he is alive from the dead that exerciſes it: and ſomething like it may be ſeen in a young ſeduced tranſgreſſor, who hath received his ſentence, and who faints away at the ſight of the fatal tree, and little better than half dead when the cap is drawn over his face; but, to his aſtoniſhment, his pardon is proclaimed while the halter is about his neck. The former ſight drank up his ſpirits, but his pardon diſſolves him quite. But what is this, when compared to a ſoul in the fearful hands of the living God, and who receives his pardon over the belly of hell, and is at once plucked as a brand from the burning, and wrapped up in the boſom of divine and everlaſting love? Let the ſons of God rehearſe theſe his mighty acts in the places of drawing water, when the ſtreams from the wells of ſalvation overflow all their banks, and the glorious God appears to be a place of broad rivers and ſtreams wherein ſhall go no galley with oars.

No fruitfulneſs, my ſon, wilt thou ever find, but by virtue of union with the living Vine. In him is our fruit found; the cloſer we cleave to him, the

more virtue comes from him; and the more we receive from his fulneſs, the more we ſhall ſavour of his name. All his garments ſmell of myrrh, aloes, and caſſia; abide under his ſkirt, and thou ſhalt be a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt to them that love him, and a ſweet ſavour of God in Chriſt to them that hate him. The Holy Spirit is a ſweet leader, and an inward dictator: obſerve the inclinations which he gives to prayer, and obey them; likewiſe the aid and aſſiſtance that he grants to us while engaged in it; the paſſages he brings for us to plead, the arguments he gives us to uſe; the fervour, the faith, the expectation alſo, as well as the enlargement of heart, the boldneſs, the nearneſs of acceſs, the freedom and familiarity; in all theſe things he helps our infirmities, and makes ſenſible interceſſion for us, according to the will of God: beſides the melting and humbling ſenſations, the powerful motions of love, the ſight that he gives us of our wants, and of the fulneſs of Chriſt to ſupply them; the various views that he gives us of his ſufferings, and the diſcoveries he gives us of the myſteries of his kingdom; the future views and ſweet thoughts which his wonderful operations produce in the heaven-born ſoul. He that is led by this infallible guide is a child of God; therefore what he dictates obſerve, what he points out do, and where he leads go—*and he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.*

Beware alſo of the leaven of the Phariſees, which

is hypocriſy; and let them not entangle thee with the yoke of bondage. The ſpirit of bondage is nothing elſe but the wrath of God: the law worketh wrath, and nothing elſe; it can curſe us to death, and that is all. And when they tell you that we are delivered from the curſe, but are under the precept, tell them the law is not divided. He that labours to keep the precept is under the ſentence—*as many as are of the works of the law are under the curſe*; and he that goes to it, Chriſt ſhall profit him nothing, he is inverting the order of God, and fruſtrating his grace: he that toils at the precept of the law rejects the Saviour's active obedience as inſufficient, and he that relies upon his own performances deſpiſes his blood. And when they tell you we are under the law to Chriſt, aſk them what law; and if they ſay the moral law, tell them that is not the new covenant, that is not the law God writes on the mind and puts in the heart by his Spirit; for God miniſters not the Spirit by the works of the law. The law of faith and the Spirit always go together: the day you believed, you were ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe. The iſles are to wait for the Saviour's law, and his teſtimony is to be bound up, and his law ſealed, among his diſciples; to this law and teſtimony we are to go, and if they ſpeak not according to this word of life, there is no light in them; we are under the law of faith to Chriſt, and God miniſters the Spirit by the hearing of faith. Their laſt refuge is, that the law in the hand of

Chriſt

Chriſt is the believer's rule of life; but tell them that the moral law is not the Saviour's ſceptre, that it is not *the rod of his ſtrength that came out of Zion*, that came from Sinai. Nor is the law the ſtrength of grace, but the ſtrength of ſin; *for the ſtrength of ſin is the law.* The rod of the Lord's ſtrength is his *goſpel, which is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth*; with this he ſmites the earth, and with the breath of his lips he ſlays the wicked—by making his ſervants, who are miniſters of the Spirit, a ſavour of life unto life to them that believe, and a ſavour of death unto death to them that believe not. This is the rod of Chriſt's ſtrength which is come out of Zion, and by which he rules in the midſt of Jeruſalem. Mind what I ſay, and God give thee underſtanding in all things; and walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh. The Lord be with thy ſpirit. Amen.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LXV.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

REVEREND AND HONOURED FATHER,

THE concern, the tenderneſs, the ſimpathy, and the compaſſion, which you ſhewed me when I was ſinking under the terrors of the Lord; when there was none, though I had looked on the right hand and on the left, that knew me, nor ſeemed to care for my ſoul; the light I received, and the power I felt from your miniſtry; the many wreſtlings with God in prayer with me and for me; the many kind inſtructions you communicated in private, and which the good Lord was pleaſed to bleſs, have for ever united my ſoul to you. I know God is in you, and with you; I have felt his power and ſweet influence from you; and all the attacks of open enemies have never ſhaken me in this confidence, nor do all the inſinuations of pretended friends now move me: I know that Satan works by them, for his ſuggeſtions are the ſame as their inſinuations; but he can find no place; no, my faith ſtands in the power I have felt, and God hath given me light ſo ſee both him

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and them. Nor can I ſee, in the light of God's word, wherein you have acted wrong in any thing.

The contents of this letter are as clear as they are true. I know that where theſe joints and bands are wanting, that, ſooner or latter, ſuch members will either drop off, or be cut off. Such communications as theſe are profitable to my ſoul, and I thank you (under God) for what I have received, and I ſtill hope for more. I know to whom God ſent me at firſt to be taught and fed, and by that crib I mean, by his help, to abide; I know as well as Elihu, and I have ſeen it in the ſame light as he did, that an *interpreter* is a rare thing; one among a thouſand Job found that ſhewed him God's uprightneſs in chaſtening of him, and told him that he ſhould be delivered from going down to the pit, for God had found a ranſom.

I can ſee, now, wherefore the Lord kept me above a year under a ſore ſpirit of deſpondency, and ſent me from place to place over a deal of England, and Wales too; and every where I went I ſearched for goſpel preachers, and looked to their pulpits for a little light and ſome hope; but in vain. Some preached the law, and holineſs in the fleſh, in ſuch a manner, that I deſpaired of ever being ſaved; my very fleſh moved on my bones at the hearing of it, and I curſed the day wherein I was born. Others preached the doctrines of the goſpel with ſuch a carnal glee, attempting to move the affections, and

with

with ſuch bold and preſumptive expreſſions, tending to raiſe carnal confidence, that my ſoul was diſguſted at the hearing of it; for I knew that I had been there long enough myſelf, and that it was from them I had fallen. All that they could advance was nothing but the ruins of a hypocrite's houſe, upon which he had leaned, but it would not bear him up. Some appeared to me to preach the word very clearly, and ſeemed to enjoy what they preached; but they did not come near my caſe, nor could they ſhew that any in my circumſtances, and with my feelings, were ever ſaved; and therefore I concluded, at times, that I was caſt away for ever, and expected every day my body would drop into the grave, and my ſoul into hell. But when I had read *Hart's Preface*, and your *Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer*, which books I had never read before, I found a gleam of hope now and then riſing within me; this led me to ſearch for more of your books, and the books led me to you.

If I am not miſtaken in my conjectures, the ring-leaders of the party that now riſe up had before this conceived a prejudice either againſt you or your miniſtry, if not againſt both; and the devil was permitted to ſend this preacher only to bring forward the birth; for I believe it works ſome time in them before we ſee it brought forth. But when luſt to envy is conceived, it will bring forth ſin; and when this is finiſhed, it bringeth forth death—death on all their comforts for a while, if not on their ſouls for ever.

I believe

I believe the Lord ſhewed me ſomething of this affair, as ſoon as you communicated ** to me: I ſaw that many would now be diſcovered, and ſome purged from you—there muſt be hereſies, that thoſe who are approved may be made manifeſt—that you would have ſome ſorrow and grief for a while, but that you would come forth clothed with double power; and that new work would go forward, and many freſh volunteers come to the ſtandard, is what I really believed. And now I find that ſome have a little joy, expecting the church will be rent to pieces; but we know that the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, and whilſt it laſts it can hardly counterbalance the accuſations within. Some weak ones ſeem to be ſtaggered, but they will ſee ere long where the hand of the Lord will reſt.

Your's moſt affectionately,

J. J.

LETTER LXVI.

To the Rev. Mr. J———.

DEAR SIR,

THIS being a cloudy and dark morning, and finding myſelf inclined not to go abroad till the time of labour comes on, I thought I would employ myſelf, for an hour, in letting you know that I ſtill gain by trading. The dealings of God with my ſoul, under this laſt *burden of the word of the Lord*, has been rather unuſual to me. When the ungodly triumphed I went heavily, as one that ate the bread of mourners, and grieved for the honour of my Lord and my God; and this he let me feel ſeverely, till at length he deigned to mingle his pity with my concern for his honour, which made my bowels yearn over him, and I felt the ſounding of his bowels towards me; this diſſolved me, and encouraged freedom and fervour in prayer, which I then gave myſelf wholly up to; and, as this familiarity went on, grief of courſe went off. In about a fortnight the whole burden was caſt upon the Lord, and he ſuſtained me. From that day I was equipt with might by his Spirit in the

inner

inner man, and clad with zeal as with a cloak; he furniſhed me with text upon text, truth upon truth, and argument upon argument; he mingled his jealouſy with my cauſe, his reſentment with my zeal, and his diſpleaſure in my quarrel; he ſent his rebukes and reproofs with power to their conſciences; and when they ſpurned at his truth, he made the fall of their countenance proclaim the riſe of their rebellion. Now, of late, in private I have been indulged with much meekneſs, contrition, godly ſorrow, and mourning, over his unparalleled goodneſs to the moſt unworthy of all his creatures; and this with faith in her fulleſt exerciſe, and hope in her greateſt expectations.

How ſtrange are the goings of God upon the ſoul, and how different and wonderful the ſenſations under the operations of the various perfections of his nature! When he humbles himſelf to behold the things done on earth, and viſits the ſoul with his preſence, what compunction and humility of heart is felt! When love operates, all is heaven, joy, peace, and comfort.

When mercy moves on us, meekneſs, godly ſorrow, repentance, and ſelf-abaſement, follow.

If power be put forth, how bold, ſtrong, undaunted, courageous; how valiant for the truth, how fearleſs of men, and how reſolute and determined, is the mind! *My ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.*

If juſtice impreſs the ſoul, fearfulneſs and trembling

bling have taken hold upon me, and I am afraid of thy judgments. O! that I had wings like a dove, I would haſten my eſcape from this ſtormy wind and tempeſt!

If the life of God is manifeſted, how lively, active, diligent, cheerful, earneſt, fervent, and devout; up in the morning to prayer, then to buſineſs, away to the means, longing for every appointed opportunity, all the wheels are in motion, and the ſpirit of the living-creature is in the wheels: this makes the church the *chariot of Aminidab (the chariot of my willing people)*. The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee as I do this day; the fathers to the children ſhall make known thy truth.

But when the ineffable beams of eternal light break forth, when the light of his countenance is lifted up, when he ſhines into the heart to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, then we are children of light indeed, this is the brightneſs of Zion's riſing; in thy light we ſhall ſee light, wonders appear in his law, wonders appear in his goſpel, ſweetneſs in his face, vanity in the world, and wiſdom in all the works of creation; his glory covers the heavens, and the earth is full of his praiſe.

When holineſs diſcovers itſelf to a ſinner, then *woe is me, I am undone; all my comelineſs is turned into corruption, and I retain no ſtrength:* I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye

ſeeth thee, wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.

When a mouth and wiſdom are given to a fool, how ſound the ſpeech; how well guarded the ſubject; how is every avenue of infidelity ſtopped up, and no way left open for an ill deſigning hypocrite to creep out at. Every occaſion is cut off from thoſe that ſeek occaſion; the wiſe in their own conceit are confounded, and appear mere idiots before the doctrine of the Lord. Divine wiſdom diſplayed in a fool, brings to nought the wiſdom of the wiſe, and makes their underſtanding fooliſhneſs.

If he is angry with a people, he will influence his ſervants with it, and ſet them to fight his battles. Samſon's father and mother knew not that Samſon's marriage with the Philiſtine damſel was of the Lord, and that he ſought a quarrel with the Philiſtines.

If God is provoked to jealouſy by his own people, he will pour his jealouſy upon thoſe who perſonate him. Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſy? are we ſtronger than he? *I am jealous over you with a godly jealouſy, leſt your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.*

And if he is pleaſed with a humble, teachable, tractable people, then comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſaith your God, ſpeak ye comfortably to Jeruſalem; and if we are comforted, it is for your ſakes, that we may comfort others with the comfort wherewith we ourſelves are comforted of God.

O, my

O, my dear friend, how great and wonderful have theſe things appeared to me! And oh, how little underſtood in our day! Truly this is fulfilling the greateſt promiſe—*as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.*

This is the chariot in which the Lord rides and tranſacts his gracious dealings, and carries on the affairs of his kingdom; out of Zion he ſhines, and ſounds out the trumpet of his mercy—*the law ſhall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem.* O, happy Zion, the city of the great King! God is known in her palaces for a refuge; peace be within thy walls, and proſperity within thy palaces; for my brethren and companions' ſake will I now ſay, peace be within thee; becauſe of the houſe of the Lord my God I will ſeek thy good. But what an awful character is an hypocrite in Zion; what feigned faith and diſſembled love; what ſmooth behaviour, and words ſofter than oil, while ſeven abominations are in their hearts. I know that the arrows of God have ſtuck faſt in the hearts of many of them, and they have long reſented it, and grudged and grinned like a dog, and gone round about the city. They wiſhed to wrench the bow from my hand, but it abode in ſtrength, and my hands were made ſtrong by the mighty God of Jacob: they ſhot at me, they grieved me, and hated me for the truth, and for the truth's ſake; but he covered me with his feathers, under his wings he enabled me to truſt, while truth was both my ſhield and buckler. And

can you believe it, that no more than two perſons deſerted that were not prejudged? When I firſt came to London, if I got hold of an old profeſſor, who had long been admitted to other ſocieties, and who appeared circumſpect, and who was well recommended, it was enough for me. I, through mock modeſty, thought it preſumption in me (who was ſo much younger in Chriſt) to inquire diligently into their converſion, when ſuch great men had received them; but, alas! I found ſome of theſe to be the vileſt hypocrites that ever my eyes beheld. And I am effectually cured of this diſeaſe; no man's light or judgment will now do for me. However, I am made manifeſt in the conſcience of them all, nor ſhall they ever get out of the reach of my teſtimony: if they are ſaved, they will acknowledge me to the end; and, if they are damned, I ſhall in my teſtimony exiſt in their conſcience, as a witneſs againſt them to all eternity, as ſure as Moſes accuſes them that truſt in him and reject his teſtimony of Chriſt. I bleſs my God that he hath purged the floor; never was a text of holy writ more conſpicuouſly fulfilled than this—*I will make thee a new ſharp threſhing-inſtrument having teeth; thou ſhalt threſh the mountains, and make the hills as chaff; thou ſhalt fan them, and the wind ſhall carry them away, and the whirlwind ſhall ſcatter them, and thou ſhalt rejoice in the Lord, and ſhalt glory in the Holy One of Iſrael.* Iſa. xli. 15, 16. As I threſhed and beat the mountains that oppoſed our Zerubbabel, and the hills in their towering profeſſion, you would have ſtood

ſtood aſtoniſhed to ſee how thoſe were ſcattered and blowed to and fro with this wind of doctrine. I uſed the flail, and my Maſter uſed the fan; and the devil, by divine permiſſion, raiſed the wind; till you would have thought that the houſe had been ſmitten at all the four corners. But they are ſeparated, bleſſed be God, from us; and God hath barred and bolted them out of my heart, and confirmed me that my former private judgment, of thoſe I allude to, was the judgment of truth: and this word abode long with me—*as the Lord liveth, before whom I ſtand, there ſhall be neither dew nor rain, but according to my word.* And this confirmed it. Theſe have power to ſhut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to ſmite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. Rev. xi. 6. I have ſome underſtanding in this myſtery, and have ſeen it fulfilled in part; ſome have no dew, and others are unmaſked and appear in their ſin and in their blood, while others are utterly unclean, with the plague in their head.

God for ever bleſs thee,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LXVII.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

The two laſt favours, of the beſt of all friends, have ſafely arrived, and really they were welcome; and I pray that ſuch as they may often find their way to my little hut, for they never come empty; and I do not know what to compare them to, unleſs they are like the feet of thoſe that bring good tidings. When I read them there is a ſweet ſavour in them, and I truſt it is of life to life. I know they are endited under the influence of the living Spirit, and I find life and power in them; they always bring me to a frame that I much like—of melting, mourning, humbling, weeping, hoping, and expecting, and work gratitude in my heart to God, and many ſecret thanks to the inſtrument of all this under him; they are the only means that have been of any uſe to me, nor can I expect any help, comfort, ſupport, or refreſhment, from any other quarter. The ſweet and comfortable frame, which I mentioned to you lately, continued with me for a week, or more; but now I have loſt it, it

went

went off gradually, and I am left again barren and dry. I wished much to keep it while I had it, for I was comfortable day and night; my sleep was so unusually refreshing; and when I awoke, as I did then often, the first thing I thought on was the Lord; my thoughts went after him, nor were there such bars and hindrances in the way as there used to be. O, how I have longed for it again! I thought, and think still, that if I could live in such a frame, that nothing could hurt me in life or death. But it is not so now with me; and yet I am not left so miserable in my mind: I find something of the sweetness of it on my spirit now and then, nor is it so hard to preach as it was; it appears as if I had shifted my ground a little, but I look and long for more yet to come. At times I am very restless, disappointed in my expectations, doubting whether it was of God; and then again full of hope and expectation, waiting, looking, and confessing my vileness and unworthiness of any favour or mercy from his hands. I have found and felt that the description you have given of the way, from time to time, are all true and exact; but I have been slow of heart to believe, and still am. You say, "that every hindrance in the way will be attended with jealousy, love-sickness, &c." and so I find it; and can understand a little of the fifth chapter of the Song of Solomon; and I had a comfortable season lately in preaching from this passage—*I charge you,*

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O daughters of Jeruſalem, if ye find my beloved, to tell him that I am ſick of love.

You may be ſure of it that I ſhall have no ſuch engagements as the laſt, when I come to ſee you again; I had enough of it then. I had a great deſire to ſee my old friend, as I eſteemed him once very highly; I looked upon him to be the firſt that I knew, and held him the laſt in my affections. I went to hear him that night; and ſo far from what they call being prejudiced, that I had the greateſt deſire to find him in the truth; but, alas, alas! I had a deal of pro and con in my mind whilſt I ſat and heard, between my judgment and natural affections. In my judgment I ſaw where he was; but yet I wiſhed to ſet him down; I was ſorry and grieved, I repined, and the devil ſet in, and told me to beware of preſumption, and not think of myſelf highly, and deſpiſe others; I began to liſten to him, till I was confounded and bewildered, and conceived hard thoughts of God, and that myſelf and others were too narrow. You cannot think in what a frame I came away. This is the firſt miniſter, as I thought, in the P———, and there are ſome ſcores in connection; but what muſt they all be? Such profeſſion and ſuch zeal I never ſaw in any country, nor never read of; and after all what is it? But it turns on my mind thus: how can the Almighty ſuffer ſuch a profeſſing body of people to be deluded? and how can I believe that the Lord ſhould chooſe me out,

the pooreſt, vileſt, and moſt ignorant of them all? I have often wondered how I came into this part of the earth; I loved my native country as much as any man ever did, but a variety of intricate providences tumbled me out of it, and ſet me down in this place, though I ſtrove hard not to come here; but I have reaſon to bleſs God for putting me down here, far enough from all connections, as I can ſee what entanglements they would be unto me. God knows that I know of but few in the miniſtry that I wiſh for any fellowſhip, correſpondence, or connection with; and I believe the Lord ſhewed me this at his firſt onſet with me, if I could but have underſtood him. And this one I hope and pray the Lord to continue long in life, and favour me with a portion of the Spirit that he has pleaſed to put upon him. I believe, before the Lord, that it is a hard matter to obtain a *double* portion of it. God Almighty bleſs you in ſoul, body, and in your miniſterial labours, is the earneſt prayer of your affectionate friend,

J. J.

LETTER LXVIII.

To the Rev. Mr. J——.

LONG looked for is come at laſt, and it is better late than never. Every epiſtle loſes more the ſtinking ſavour of diſtruſt and unbelief; and they emit the odoriferous ſcents of the bed of ſpices, and the choice perfumes of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour of Chriſt. Love and wrath, peace and torment, guilt and pardoning mercy, have for ſome time gone up and down, and ſometimes ſtood at a poiſe. In the balance of the ſanctuary God weigheth the ſpirits, and by him actions are weighed alſo; and in both theſe matters we are found wanting: but as faith increaſes and Chriſt approaches, the oppoſite ſcale, in which we were lighter than vanity, mounts and kicks the beam; union with him and the poſſeſſion of him blots *tekel* from the wall, and we are no more *found wanting*; being complete in him, and having the righteouſneſs of the law fulfilled in us. Love and wrath ſtruggled hard upon the croſs, till mercy and truth met together; and they will conteſt in the coming ſinner's ſoul, till righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other: here the benign parent meets

meets the ſelf-deſpairing, rebellious ſon, at the ſacrifice of the fatted calf, and in the robe of the elder brother embraces him with the kiſs of paternal love; the effect of which is peace, and a hearty welcome both to grace and glory. The effect of thy laſt viſion will laſt for ever, the Spirit will witneſs it; it hath laid a foundation in thy ſoul for a believing plea, and for a claim of faith upon God, as thy Father, and thy God in covenant; and which plea and claim thou wilt make in the moſt perilous hour that may ever befall thee in this world. The Spirit, at the time of that viſitation, honoured Chriſt, and ſent forth thy faith, thy affection, and praiſe, to him: and Chriſt, in the worſt hour, will honour the Spirit, both in his operations and in his teſtimony. My ſoul is joyful, my hope of thee is ſtedfaſt, my mouth is opened unto thee; thou never waſt ſtraitened in me, but only in thine own bowels. Many that watch for iniquity are waiting, not only for thy halting, but for an untimely birth, expecting that thou wilt labour and bring forth wind, and appear at laſt *an infant that never ſees light*; they ſay to God, in their hearts, *Let him haſten his work, that we may ſee it; they aſk him of things to come concerning his ſons: what command ye me?* They ſay that my ſon has been ſo long in the dark that his labour will come to nothing, and W. H. S. S. will be deceived in him. But theſe know not the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they underſtand his counſels; theſe have been too quick in their own labour; like Iſhmael they are

come

come forth before the promiſe, and before the appointed time, and therefore are ſometimes found and proved to be baſtards, and not ſons. I ſtill hold faſt mine integrity, nor doth my heart reproach me for it, that my boaſting of this Timothy will be found a truth. And then the enemies and mockers of the heir of promiſe will find their expectations cut off, and their joys wither, and they will hate both the free woman, the legitimate offspring, and the ſovereignty of the ſire; *but woe to him that ſaith to his father, What begetteſt thou? or to the woman, What haſt thou brought forth?* Theſe are the elder ſons, who never tranſgreſs the commandment, and covet the kid as a reward for eye-ſervice, and deſpiſe both the Prodigal and the Father, for his regenerating and ſaving a predeſtinated ſon by grace. Stand faſt in the Lord, my dearly beloved, and be always abounding in the work of him; ſtick to him in private prayer, and he ſhall reward thee openly, and all thine enemies ſhall ſee it, and gnaſh their teeth at it, and melt away; the deſire of the wicked ſhall periſh. Thou haſt been long at work at the dung gate, but thoſe that are far off ſhall come and build in the temple; rooting up and throwing down will be exchanged for building and planting. Divorcing and killing to the law is not all the work, there will be a publiſhing the banns of marriage, an eſpouſing, and preſenting them as chaſte virgins to Chriſt; the marriage-feaſts and the beſt wines are kept till laſt: then the friend of the bridegroom ſhall

rejoice

rejoice to hear his voice, and to see the increase of his household. The winter shall soon pass away, the rains shall blow over and be gone, the singing of birds shall then come, and the voice of the turtle be heard and understood, even at L——. Great is my hope of you, great is my boldness toward you, great is my glorying of the good work in you: I am filled with comfort; my soul weeps and blesses him for every visit, or love-token, to you; I have bowed my head and thanked him for a stedfast hope of thee, and my pen never drags like Pharaoh's wheels when I write to thee; and, in every epistle, I expect that the answer will be, Thou prisoner, go forth; thou that sittest in darkness, shew thyself, publish through the city what great things Jesus hath done for thee: sure I am that thou wilt not be sent out the second time, by man, with a false vision and causes of banishment; not with a lying divination, nor be left to speak a vision out of thine own heart, when thou hast seen nothing, either of sin, self, law, or Christ. An unctuous knowledge of these things makes a workman, a workman that needs not to be ashamed; such must divide rightly the word of truth, and do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of his ministry. God bless thee: a wise son maketh a glad father, and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

Ever thine in Christ Jesus,

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LXIX.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR,

NOTHING in the world would give me more pleaſure and ſatisfaction than your company for a few days, and I had my mare ſhod on Saturday for that purpoſe; but the weather altering yeſterday diſcouraged me, and now I am very uneaſy all day that I did not ſet off this morning. I think the weather is againſt me. If I determine on a day to go to town, I am ſure to have bad weather to go over the foreſt; and if I ſtay at home, it clears up. However, I hope it will not be long before I enjoy that pleaſure. Next week I cannot, as I am under an engagement to go to ſome diſtant places.

I long in my heart to ſee you; I really am a myſtery to myſelf, though it does not ſeem that I puzzle you much, for you always ſee where I am, and know what I am about, though at a diſtance from me. Your laſt letter but one, I think, contains all that can be ſaid of me, and I believe

you can have nothing more to write to me, nor do I believe that a mortal can ſet forth greater and clearer truths, and I often wonder from what ſpring they can flow. My ſoul earneſtly covets them, and I do humbly pray the Almighty to make me a partaker of them; and I am not altogether without hope, at times, that I ſhall yet prevail with his divine Majeſty to grant them. Theſe laſt letters of yours have again revived my hope, ſomehow unawares to me; though I thought, in reading them, that their contents were too good to be true of me: yet they have, I truſt, communicated ſome light and power to my ſoul; and this I judge from ſome comfortable ſeaſons I have had of late. At times I can ſee a little glimmering light, juſt at a diſtance, on my ſtate, but it will not come near; I try to get at it, but it goes off, yet at ſuch times I am ſure to get a little light in the word of God, and when that is the caſe I can preach boldly; and at ſuch ſeaſons I ſeem to be as happy, and as much ſatisfied, though up to my knees at the dung-gate, as you are when you have accompliſhed the moſt curious piece of workmanſhip within the walls of the houſe. But now you ſhall know the whole truth. I do not find theſe ſeaſons humble me ſo much as I could wiſh, and lead me to admire God's goodneſs towards me; inſtead of that, I find ſuch fooliſh thoughts as theſe filling my head—what a great *** I ſhall be ſome day, and what work I

have

have to do, &c. &c.—until again I am ſoul-tied and tongue-tied in the pulpit for four or five times running, and this, I think, is enough to make any man mad, and at times it has made me nearly ſo.

How awfully has my heart rebelled againſt the Almighty, when I have ſeen carnal profeſſors ſitting to judge me, and to criticize my words. I uſed to be as expert as any of them at doctrines and phraſes, but now I have neither underſtanding nor memory at command; and that they can find any thing to cavil at has made me ready to curſe my day. But ſtill I know that I am never wrong in the main. I am ſure that I do not miſtake the ſtate of the people. I may, at times, miſapply a ſcripture, for want of ſome more applicable to my purpoſe; but then I am not out in the material point. And however curious they may weave their ſyſtems, I know that they are deſtitute of the power; and you know the kingdom ſtands in power: and when I inſiſt on this, they cry out that I ſlight and ſet aſide the word of God. Upon the whole, what a poor unſtable creature you muſt needs judge me to be, and I much fear, through all, that I never ſhall excel. I often think too, that if the Lord is pleaſed to continue to lay my caſe on your mind, and make you pray for me, and write to me, and your patience hold out to bear with me,

that

that I ſhall yet come forth. I have not the leaſt inclination to look to any other inſtrument but yourſelf, and this makes me to conclude that it is the means which God hath appointed.

May God abundantly reward and bleſs you for what is paſt, and I ſhall live in expectation of more yet to come. As for Moſes' club, I have enough of that daily; but I believe I muſt have more of it before I can be made to forſake him. I know in my judgment that Chriſt is better, but my ſecret attachment indeed is to him. This is truly my error, but I cannot mend it.

Witneſs,

J. J.

LETTER LXX.

To the Rev. Mr. J——.

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

How pleaſant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! But, as it is with the human, ſo it is, and muſt be, with the myſtical body of Chriſt; there muſt be joints and bands, or the members cannot move in concert, cannot have the ſame care one of another, cannot weep with them that weep, nor rejoice with them that rejoice.

Thoſe who never felt the cords of their ſins, nor what it is to be bound with them, are not included in our Lord's commiſſion, which is to open the priſon doors to them that are bound; for this work he was appointed, anointed, and ſent.

Thoſe who never were in bondage to the fear of death and wrath, are excluded alſo; for he came to deliver them, who, through the fear of death, were all their lifetime ſubject to bondage; nor is it poſſible that ſuch ſhould be the genuine offſpring of God, *for he that is our God is the God of ſalvation,*

and unto God the Lord belongs the iſſues from death; and both the offspring and the iſſue hang, as veſſels of mercy, on the nail faſtened in a ſure place.

Where no pardon has been ſealed, no ſaving knowledge of ſalvation can be found. Such muſt be ſtrangers to the covenant that God makes with his people, which is, to be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and iniquities he will remember no more. Where this experience is not found, their faith is vain; ſuch are yet in their ſin, and ſtrangers to peace, which is the bleſſed effect of pardon—*thy ſins are forgiven thee, go in peace.* Such never had peace, and of courſe never *could hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of it.*

Where fear and torment never were felt, there perfect love never entered; and where love was never ſhed abroad in the heart, there never was any ſaving knowledge of God, nor any ſpiritual birth, in order to an admiſſion into the kingdom; for it is only he that loveth that is born of God, and knoweth God; for he that loveth not, knóweth not God, for God is love; ſuch never could *put on charity, the bond of all perfection.* Once more, that faith which never purified the heart, which never apprehended an imputed righteouſneſs, and which never put that robe on, which never led the ſinner to Chriſt to caſt his cares and burdens there, and by faith to enter into his reſt; that faith never gave Chriſt an exiſtence in the heart, nor the ſinner an exiſtence in

Chriſt. *Believe*, ſaith the Lord, *that I am in you, and you in me.* And where this union never took place, communion with him was never enjoyed, and of courſe ſuch ſouls never could *meet together in the unity of faith*; that is, they never did meet together in the covenant head, in the unity of the faith of God's elect: and ſuch ſouls are deſtitute of every *joint* peculiar to the body of Chriſt, and of every *band* that holds that body together; and to purge out ſuch, is denying all concord between Chriſt and Belial; it is ſeparating the children of light from thoſe of darkneſs, believers from infidels, ſaints from ſinners, the vile from the precious, the chaff from the wheat—*My hand finds this to do, and we intend to do it with all our might; for there is no work or device in the grave, whither all are haſtening.* I expect Jannes and Jambres, Korah and Dathan, to withſtand me in this buſineſs; but I know he is curſed of God that doth his work deceitfully, and I know I am well armed, and well equipped, by the great Captain who ſtands by me in the field. You ſee I am in all things, and by all means inſtructed; every anonymous letter that comes, and every obſervation that I make abroad, are brought forth to me in my ſtudy, while every thing is opened up, expounded, and explained to me by the Lord, whilſt I ſit at his foot and receive of his word: and he ſweetly leads me *to judge all things*; but tells me in his word, that, in theſe ſecret matters which he

ſhews

ſhews to me, *I can be judged of none.* What the good Lord ſhews me I ſhall communicate to you, as you have long known my manner of life, doctrine, purpoſe, faith, &c.

I am determined to have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs. For ſure I am that ſuch preachers are in the condemnation of the devil; they are lifted up with pride when they intrude themſelves into the ſacred office, and in the gall of bitterneſs while they execute it. If Eli breaks his neck, the prieſts fall by the ſword, and their widows make no lamentation for their loſs; if the ark goes into captivity, and the glory of God into the enemy's hand; if Ichabod comes upon Shiloh, and the houſe of Eli is never to be purged by ſacrifice nor offering for ever, for the vileneſs of Hophni and Phinehas under that diſpenſation; what muſt the end of them be, who carry on the works of Belial under the light and heat of life and immortality brought to light by the goſpel? I know what fleſh and blood is, and the different luſtings and continual war between fleſh and ſpirit. But to hold the bonds of iniquity in a ſeared conſcience, and under unpardoned guilt to appear with a brazen brow as God's ambaſſador, and to enforce daring and damnable preſumption under the name of the aſſurance of faith; theſe are as evident tokens of perdition as ever was found upon the arch-leader of the rebel angels; but I have done. I pity my dear Lord and

Maſter, and I know he pities me, and I truly feel for his poor flock. Adieu; thine in the beſt of bonds.

Pray for me.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LXXI.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR laſt kind favour has been ſafely received, and thankfully too. I believe that none of them has ever come without bringing me ſomething that I am the better for receiving; and if I do not find it at the firſt reading, I am ſure to meet with it at the ſecond, or the third; they never get dry by lying in my houſe. I remember it was ſaid of one, that his letters were weighty and powerful; yea, and I can ſay that his ſpeech and his bodily preſence are acceptable to me, and I wiſh I could both ſee and hear him oftener. Nothing in this world, I am perſuaded, can ever make me forget you; I feel

ſuch

ſuch heartfelt friendſhip with you as I never did with any other living perſon. I do not know whether I may call it by any other name than *friendſhip*; I know it is that, and more than that, but I ſhould rejoice for ever if it ſhould prove at laſt to be ſpiritual union. I have often wondered why I ſhould be laid ſo much upon your heart, when I know that I am ſo unworthy of it. I hope, at times, that the Lord puts me there, and am thankful to him, and that he puts it in your heart to care for me; for this gentleneſs of yours, I can tell you, has often been very ſweet to me, when I could find no ſuch treatment from any other quarter. At other times I have attributed the whole of it to your natural tenderneſs, and at ſome ſeaſons I have trembled for you as well as for myſelf, and have been ſorry in my heart that you ſhould have expoſed your judgment to the rage and contempt of all the fools that would ſee my deſtruction at laſt. I never have been angry with you in my life, but for one thing; and that is, that you have expoſed me ſo much; that you did not conceal me, pray for me, and write privately to me, and ſay nothing more about me, but let me be hid until the indignation be overpaſt.

I am, at preſent, juſt where you mention in your letter; in the balance, between hope and deſpair: ſometimes hope turns it, then I wait and expect; but that which is hoped for not coming, doubts ariſe, fear, and unbelief; then to fretting and murmuring I fall, and darkneſs and bondage gather faſt, and de-

ſpondency then weighs me down, and I give up all for loſt. If I could but ſee that the Lord, by theſe things, is teaching me things profitable for me to know, I ſhould be more patient and more reſigned; ſometimes I can ſee a glimmering light, but it ſoon goes off.

I ſee you can well deſcribe the preparations for the pulpit, and the operations in it, and it is ſome comfort to me that you have known and felt them as you have deſcribed. Indeed I know that the ſecond ſermon is a preparation for the third; and though I am loth to go at it the third time, and wiſh not to meddle with it any more, yet I can ſoon feel, when I begin, that I have been taught ſomething by my laſt diſappo ntment. But, above all, I think, the mocking of the Philiſtines is the worſt; I can ſee it in their countenances, but have no ſtrength to cut at them; I am ſenſible then that quietneſs behoves me beſt, and paſs over my tale as well as I can; and I have wiſhed that the people would build me a little veſtry behind the pulpit, and cut a door to go into it, that I might lock up myſelf immediately, and ſee no face at all. I hope, when the days get a little longer, that I ſhall be able to come and ſee you. I have been very poorly all this winter, with gouty and rheumatic pains all over me, which make me unable to ride much. The Lord bleſs you, and give you power to pray for me, and my poor prayers ſhall mix with yours.

J. J.

LETTER LXXII.

To the Rev. J. J———.

My hope of thee, dear brother, is ſteadfaſt; knowing this, that as thou art a partaker of the ſufferings of Chriſt, ſo ſhalt thou be alſo of the conſolations. Thy internal conflicts are doubtleſs the chaſtening rod of God upon thee for thy ſin, but not altogether ſo. One part is divine teaching in order to future uſefulneſs, and that which comes upon thee from fools, for truth and conſcience ſake, is the ſufferings of Chriſt. The firſt cutting rebuke given to Paul was for his madneſs in perſecuting; but what came afterwards was for the ſake of Chriſt—*I will ſhew him how great things he muſt ſuffer for my name ſake.* From the authority of that text Paul calls all his ſufferings the ſufferings of Chriſt, which he ſuffered for his body's ſake, which is the church. I perceive, by your invitations to freſh places, that God ſets before you an open door, and none ſhall ſhut it; he will ſpread your fame, and the word will ſound out from L——, and bear down all oppoſition, inſomuch as Chriſt will make manifeſt the ſavour of his name in a freſh line of things not made ready

ready to your hand, a line to reach unto many who have never yet heard the fame of Jeſus. " That " light which ſhines upon thy ſtate of mind" is the *day-dawn* which breaks out upon them that ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death; thou wilt not always grope for the wall like the blind at noonday. After thou haſt had a proper view of thyſelf, of the law, and of the holineſs and juſtice of God, thou ſhalt ſee the myſteries of the kingdom, and a covenant God in the face of Jeſus ſhining into thy heart, and changing thee into the ſame image from glory to glory, and all this by looking through a glaſs darkly. This, my ſon, is the hope ſet before thee—*he that overcometh and keepeth my works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and will give him the Morning Star*, the harbinger of endleſs glory. Then, my ſon, ſhall old things paſs, and all things ſhall become new. The Spirit ſhall bring all things to your remembrance that the Lord hath ſpoken to thee and done for thee; and the quickening power put forth in thy preſent experience, will be a guide to thee in a thouſand future difficulties, called by the prophet, *a voice behind thee, ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left.* When once the Lord makes darkneſs light before thee, he will make thy preſent crooked things ſtraight; then the deaf ſhall hear the words of the book, and the now ſenſible priſoner ſhall ſhew himſelf, and the light of his countenance, as well as the words of his mouth, ſhall

proclaim

proclaim the triumphs of his ſoul: the inward glory of grace will appear to gild the whole creation. When every thing is viewed in the light of the Lord, his glory will viſibly cover the heavens, and the earth will be full of his praiſe, and thy heart in concert (when tuned with love) will be in the chorus. Pay no regard to thoſe that watch for thy halting, nor to thoſe that make thee an offender for a word, for all that watch for iniquity ſhall be cut off; and for your preſent ſhame you ſhall have double [double joy]; and for your preſent confuſion you ſhall, in future, rejoice in your portion; in this land thou ſhalt poſſeſs double, everlaſting joy ſhall be upon thee. Thou art not the firſt that ſcorners have derided, ſaying, *Where is the word of the Lord, let it come now*; but there is a woe to them that laugh now, for they ſhall weep. The Lord's countenance is already lifted up, and that was the light of it which thou ſaweſt at a diſtance, and it will ere long reflect gracious ſmiles, much peace, joy, and reconciliation; it will diſperſe the vail, the diſmal gloom and horrible cloud of diſpleaſure, and bring life and immortality to light; and then thou wilt ſay, *Thou waſt angry with me, but thine anger is turned away, and thou comforteſt me.* Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Bleſs God for every refreſhing ſeaſon, for every reſpite, and every token for good; and as for thoſe vain thoughts about future greatneſs, confeſs them as evil, as the root of pride, and pray God to ſubdue

due them by his grace; and if the Lord gives thee eyes to ſee them hateful and humbling diſpenſations, they will wither when the Spirit of God blows upon thee—*All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field; the graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.* It is this, my dear brother, and not legal ſtrivings, that will blaſt vain thoughts, wither human glory, and make all the comelineſs of the brighteſt ſaint turn into corruption.

God hath two ways of ſhining upon his people: the one is, when he comforts their hearts, and gives them the light of his knowledge in the face of Jeſus, attended with the faith of intereſt; the other is, when he ſhines into our hearts to diſcover our imperfections, and vails his throne with a cloud—then, why is light given to them that are in bitterneſs? The former view will make thee appear not a whit behind the chiefeſt ſaint, and the latter will make thee appear the chief of ſinners; and thus—*his eyelids try the children of men.*

I have no doubt but thy aims are right, for I am ſure that that preacher that expoſes the vileneſs of human nature, and preaches the purity, and ſpirituality, and unlimited demands of the law; that ſets forth the ſinner's need of a Saviour, the ſuitableneſs, the worth of him; and that debaſes the creature to the level of criminals in chains; and who enforces the neceſſity of regeneration, ſpiritual fruitfulneſs, ſpiritual ſervice, and a life and walk in faith; ſhall

not

not err in these things—*the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err in this way.* Whatever encouragement you may have received from the instrumentality of thy poor servant in Christ, thou art indebted to Christ for, and to him all glory, praise, and thanksgiving is due, and to another he will never grant it; and, for my part, I am the greatest debtor to him, and therefore ought to be the last that should ever attempt to rob him.

Tender my kind love to Mr. Morris and family, Shepherd and Shepherdess, and to all that love the altogether lovely, not forgetting your former host and family.

The Lord be with thee. Amen and amen.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LXXIII.

To the Rev. Mr. J——.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You know not with what heartfelt ſatisfaction I beheld you laſt; thy meditations of terror are nearly exhauſted, the horrible pit will ſoon be exchanged for the Rock, and thou wilt quit the dark cells and the diſmal regions. Tell me, did not the good Shepherd give thee a token for good the laſt viſit at M——, was it not a Bethel? did he not almoſt break thy yoke, and burſt thy bands? When theſe are gone, thy health ſhall ſpring up ſpeedily; thy mind is reclining and reſting on the diſcoveries and manifeſtations of dying love, hope abounds, and thy heart enlarges; budding hope terminates in open love—*Iſrael ſhall bud and bloſſom as the roſe, and fill the face of the world with fruit.*

You ſee, my dear brother, the fruits and effects of your preſent miniſtry. Some of the Hebrews are crawling out of their holes, ſome have broken forth, and others are come to the birth, but want the ſtrength of allſubduing love; *but ſhall I bring to the birth, and not cauſe to bring forth?* No, ſaith the Lord,

Lord, *as ſoon as Zion travailed ſhe brought forth her children.* A ſpirit of jealouſy will be ſpread at the report of Zion's delivery, which will provoke very many, and add fervour to their prayers, ſo that thou wilt ſee the ſpirit of the living creature in the wheels, as well as in the cherub; for jealouſy is one part of the coals of fire which go up and down among the wheels—*the Lord ſhall ſtir up jealouſy like a man of war*; and, under theſe burning influences, every one that is truly affected will be catching at the ſkirt of the Jew.

I believe in my heart, that there hath been more power diſplayed, and more execution done, in that part of the world within theſe two years, than hath been done for the ſpace of thirty years before; and what ſeems very remarkable is, that thoſe who are brought forth, and thoſe who are ſtill labouring, are, to an individual, thoſe that have been daubed up with untempered mortar, and healed ſlightly by a cry of, Peace, Peace. O! the goodneſs of God in undeceiving them, and ſtripping them of the ſheep-ſkin; but no rival, no enemy to the bridegroom, ſhall ever finally ſeduce the objects of his love—*righteouſneſs will be lay to the line, and judgment to the plummet; and the hail ſhall ſweep away the refuges of lies, and the waters ſhall overflow the hiding places, and their covenant with death ſhall be diſanulled, and their agreement with hell ſhall not ſtand.* This line and plummet try the foundation, and the ſtorm drives

drives us to ſeek for ſhelter: the bed of carnal ſecurity appears too ſhort to ſtretch ourſelves on it, and the ſcanty covering too narrow to hide our ſin and ſhame. How viſibly do you ſee the apoſtle's aſſertion—*if any man build upon this foundation, gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, wood, hay, ſtubble: every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt; for the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire; and the fire ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is.* All the king of Iſrael's ſpoils muſt go through the fire, and nothing will ſtand the fire but gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones; the wood, hay, and ſtubble, are all conſumed. Pray, what is left of all the former work? Juſt nothing; *the wall is down, and where is the daubing?* All the wounds ſlightly healed have been laid open again; and the cry of Peace, Peace, has been no defence againſt the curſes of a broken law. However, this ſhall work together for their good; for they will be the better able to diſcover the deluſive heat of ſtrange fire; they have been long encompaſſed about with the ſparks of head notions, and with that light which ſtirs up the fleſhly affections of nature, which has cauſed many, to their grief, to go to bed, and lie down in ſorrow. Nothing can ſtand but the power of God; in this his kingdom ſtands, for his goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth; and he that is deſtitute of this power is an utter ſtranger to the goſpel of Chriſt. The devil is aware of this, and

therefore

therefore to counterfeit it is the maſterpiece of all his works: and the academies are the forges, where he fits his apes for his buſineſs, who are taught to play upon the paſſions of poor ſenſeleſs ſinners with empty oratory, affected ſpeeches, great ſwelling words, counterfeited joy, and diſſembled love—*ſuch glory in appearance, but not in heart.* God hath led thee to diſcover, detect, and ſpit upon this ſtrange fire; and under God thou haſt put it out; and thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, nouriſhed up in the words of truth and of ſound doctrine. And thoſe who have oppoſed thee, and abuſed thee, will, by the bar of prejudice, and by that envy which reſts in the boſom of fools, be kept at a diſtance; while thoſe who have been grieved for the afflictions of Joſeph will now ſhare in the goodneſs which God procures to Iſrael: but the others will burn with rage, and feel vexation in their ſouls, when they hear the report. *He bringeth out thoſe that are bound with chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.* Thoſe that love the power, and make the Lord their truſt, ſhall be as a tree planted by the waters, that ſendeth forth its roots by the rivers; its leaf ſhall be green, nor ſhall they ceaſe from yielding fruit. But thoſe that deſpiſe the power, and make fleſh their arm, ſhall be as the dreary deſert and barren heath, and ſhall not know when good cometh: and thou wilt ſee theſe things made manifeſt before

thine eyes. And do thou obſerve theſe things minutely, and they will furniſh thee with many a ſuitable ſubject; for daily, in the church, and among the enemies of it, as well as in thy own ſoul, wilt thou ſee the Lord in his goodneſs paſs before thee, and his word opening and fulfilling, yea, all the day long.

God bleſs thee, and keep thee, is the earneſt prayer of thy fellow-labourer and companion in the kingdom and patience of Chriſt.

W. H. S. S.

LETTER LXXIV.

To the Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

MY MOST BELOVED FRIEND,

THIS morning I received your epiſtle, and have read it over, and truly it has been a ſweet repaſt to me; the matter of it, without contradiction, is truth; and the ſpirit of it exceeding ſweet to my taſte, ſweeter than the honey, yea, than the honey-

comb. Thine epiſtles, I can ſay in truth, are weighty and powerful, and ſo I have found the bodily preſence of this ſervant of Chriſt likewiſe; thy word is not weak, nor thy ſpeech in any ſenſe contemptible. For truly ſuch as I have found him in word by letters, being abſent; ſuch alſo have I found him in deed, when he has been preſent. Our laſt interviews have been exceeding comfortable to my ſoul, and more eſtabliſhing, I think, than ever.

The laſt diſcourſe I heard from you at Monkwell-ſtreet was truly ſweet and ſavory; I was more ſtrengthened and eſtabliſhed that night than ever I was in my life. A ſweet light broke into my ſoul, and I could ſee the path the Lord hath been leading me in, and follow you in all you ſaid upon regeneration; there was nothing in your account of that way that offended me, ſtaggered me, or was a cauſe of ſtumbling to me; I was enabled to mix faith with the word as you went on, and the light ſeemed to increaſe more and more; I found my ſeat ſo comfortable and eaſy, that I believe if you had preached till morning light, I ſhould have found myſelf neither weary, ſleepy, nor hungry. It is delightful to ſit under his ſhadow, when his fruit is ſo ſweet to our taſte; and I know that what dropped that night was from the tree of life; for it is ſaid, that his leaves ſhall be for healing, and his fruit for meat, and I found both.

Our ſeaſon at B—— was nothing leſs precious. I believe Mr. B——'s old barn is now conſecrated

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Our ſeaſon at B—— was nothing leſs precious. I believe Mr. B——'s old barn is now conſecrated

ground, for you well know that the chief Biſhop himſelf deigned to be there, and made that old ſtorehouſe a Bethel indeed; and I believe many will be looking for the return of the year, and will be wiſhing the farmer to threſh out his corn as ſoon as poſſible, for they will remember your promiſe of viſiting them again, if God ſpares your life.

I am fully perſuaded in my ſoul that your obſervation is juſt and true. The Lord certainly is doing a work that has not been done in this country for many years back, and the deſpiſers wonder at it, and to all appearance will periſh, for they will not believe, though it is declared unto them. I think it may be ſaid, in one ſenſe, to be the Lord's ſtrange work; for all that I found in this part of the world, as well as myſelf, were entire ſtrangers to it, and totally ignorant of it, till it pleaſed the Lord to awaken me, and ſend me to alarm others. And your other obſervation is no leſs true; for I believe all that are awakened, or in travail, or are come forth, are ſuch as were once ſet down with a form of godlineſs; moſt of them very high in carnal confidence, reſting in a knowledge of the letter, underſtanding in the theory ſome myſteries, but not the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience—puffed up with their fleſhly wiſdom; but all of us ſtrangers to that power in which the kingdom of Chriſt ſtands. O the goodneſs of God indeed! to viſit ſuch a parcel of wretches, and not to ſuffer us to periſh in our own deceivings. But, above all, how deep,

how

how unfathomable are his counſels! To chooſe ſuch a poor, deſpicable, vile, and dunghill devil as me, to be an inſtrument in his hands of doing any good to his children; this aſtoniſhes me more than any thing: and when I have met with, or heard of, any that have been bleſſed through my miniſtry, I have wept at his feet, and humbled myſelf in duſt and aſhes before him, and gave all the praiſe of it to him, as I know it is moſt due. Under my firſt alarm, you well know, I left my congregation, having then no ſuſpicion that they were in the ſame ſtate as myſelf, but viewed myſelf to be the only apoſtate. I left them then with a determination never more to come back to this country; for my falſe cable was cut by this ſcripture—*the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou ſhalt not proſper in them.* I fled, and conſcience purſued me. I travelled into my native country for the benefit of the air, and rambled about for many months in England and Wales; but alas, alas! neither air nor ſea-water could afford me any relief. The congregation at L—— tried to ſettle another miniſter over them, concluding I was gone for ever; but they could not. I wanted ſome place in the ends of the earth where I might flee to, but could find none. I endeavoured all that I could not to come back here again; but Providence forced me back, though ſorely againſt my will. It was not long after this that the Lord was pleaſed to bring me acquainted with you, after I had firſt ſeen and read your books;

here

here I received the firſt ground of hope, as my letters ſhew. After I had converſed with you, heard you ſeveral times, and had been a month at your houſe, I returned home, with both light and hope in my ſoul; and with that little light I had, I began to ſeparate the precious from the vile: ſome ran away from me, others cleaved to me; ſome curſed me, others have ſince bleſſed me; ſome ſaid I was mad, others thought I was coming to my right mind; and this was the truth, for I had been not much better than mad for upwards of thirty years. I now began to preach what I felt, and I ſoon found the Lord ſtood by me in it and helped me. I ſaw clear that all of them were in the ſame ſtate as myſelf; yea, when I was moſt miſerable, I was ſure that they muſt feel, in ſome degree, as I did, or be damned; and I uſed to tell them ſo: and God knows they were heavy tidings that I carried to them for a long time. I cannot but ſee now, as you obſerve, the effects of my poor miniſtry; and cannot but think often of what you uſed to tell me in time paſt, though then I could not believe you. I know the Lord hath, in a meaſure, fulfilled the word of his ſervant, and performed the counſel which his meſſenger gave me. I have ſeen, of late, ſome brought forth under my miniſtry; yea, they have eſcaped before I expected them, and I am ready to tell them, at times, *this breach be upon you.* Others have been brought out to light and liberty through the aſſiſtance of your miniſtry among us. Many

more

more I can diſcover in ſoul-travail; and one I have ſeen, and more I have heard of, ſince I ſaw you laſt. I do believe the Lord holds me back with theſe cords of affliction that I may feel, and that I may ſpeak to ſuch; but it is ſorely againſt my will; I want to ſhine forth and flouriſh in the face of mine enemies. However, I have a few arrows in my quiver which they have not, therefore I am not aſhamed when I ſpeak with them in the gates.

God bleſs you, and reward you for your labour of love, will ever be the prayer of,

J. J.

THE END.

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